

Reflections of Redemption

Essays on the Weekly Torah Reading and Moshiach,
Based on the talks of the
Lubavitcher Rebbe,
Rabbi Menachem M. Schneerson

Reprinted for Parshat Bamidbar, 5784
(Vol. 34)



VAAD L'HAFOTZAS SICHOS
788 EASTERN PARKWAY • BROOKLYN, NY 11213
5784 • 2024

IN LOVING MEMORY OF

Horav **Schneur Zalman Halevi** עי"ה
ben Horav **Yitzchok Elchonon Halevi** הי"ד
Shagalov

Passed away on 21 Tamuz, 5766

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Ekman

Passed away on 5 Sivan - Erev Shavuot, 5765

Mrs. **Devora Rivka** bas Reb **Yosef Eliezer** עי"ה
Marenburg

Passed away on the second day
of Rosh Chodesh Adar, 5766

Reb **Yitzchok Moshe** (Ian)
ben Reb **Dovid Asniel** עי"ה

Ekman (Santiago, Chile)

Passed away on the 24th day of Shevat, 5769

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AND IN HONOR OF

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Printed in the U.S.A.

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by
Rabbi Dovid Yisroel Ber Kaufmann, Ph.D

Bamidbar

TREASURE, KINGDOM, NATION

The Torah portion of Bamidbar is always read before the holiday of Shavuos. They have an inner connection based on three levels of Divine service. These three levels are alluded to by the three phrases connected with the giving of the Torah: “My special treasure,” “a kingdom of kohanim” and “a holy nation.” These parallel the three accountings found in the portion of Bamidbar. This also parallels the process of Redemption: first the Jewish people are separated from all other nations; then they lead the nations towards G-dliness; finally, knowledge of G-d covers and permeates the world as the waters cover the ocean bed.

If a particular Torah reading always occurs in conjunction with a specific holiday, by Divine Providence there must be an inner connection between the two. The portion of *Bamidbar* – the first reading of the book of Numbers – always occurs just prior to *Shavuos* – the holiday of the giving of the Torah. Also, if two things are connected, clearly the first is a preparation for the second. Thus, the Torah reading of *Bamidbar* prepares us for *Shavuos* – for receiving the Torah.

Obviously, since the Torah is given anew each year, we must prepare to receive it anew as well. Whatever preparations the Jewish people made at Sinai, we must repeat yearly. Indeed, we must prepare ourselves daily, for each day there is a revelation of Torah. In this regard, our actions now foreshadow the Torah of Moshiach. As we are on the threshold of Redemption, we are in a mode of preparation, so to speak. The parallel between the preparations before Sinai and the Torah reading of *Bamidbar* can be applied to our own time, extended to our preparations for Moshiach. Just as

Revelation followed the preparations at Sinai, and *Shavuot* follows Bamidbar, so Redemption must follow our current preparations for Moshiach.

That said, how did the Jewish people get ready to receive the Torah in the wilderness? From the first of Sivan until the sixth of the month, when the Torah was given, each day was designated for a specific part of the process. Rosh Chodesh, the first of the month, is a mini-holiday unto itself. On the second day of the month, G-d introduced the preparatory process with the words, "If you will indeed hearken to My voice, and you will keep My covenant, then you shall be My special treasure from among all the peoples, for all the earth is Mine. And you shall be for Me a kingdom of kohanim and a holy nation."

Traditionally, there are two explanations for the phrase "kingdom of kohanim." One explanation takes the phrase as a single unit. All the Jewish people are fit to be kohanim (priests), and therefore be set apart as a holy nation. The other explanation sees each phrase referring to a different aspect of the Jewish people. The second phrase, "a holy nation," indicates the holiness, the special sanctity of the Jewish people. They are all like the kohanim, set aside for Divine service. When, in the first phrase, G-d says the Jews will be a "kingdom of kohanim," it means the Jewish people are to be rulers, leaders, role models for the world. The term "kohen" may also mean a leader.

As G-d prepares the Jewish people to receive the Torah, He describes them with three phrases: "My special treasure," "a kingdom of kohanim" and "a holy nation." Each phrase represents a stage in preparing for the giving of the Torah. First, the Jewish people are separated from other peoples – "My special treasure"; next, they are princes, ruling and leading the nations of the world toward G-dliness – "a kingdom of kohanim"; third, they are

removed from the common and mundane, elevated and dedicated solely to the Divine service – “a holy nation.”

These three stages can be explained on a deeper level: First, G-d chooses the Jewish people. This choice has nothing to do with the status or superiority of the Jews. At this level, there’s no difference between “darkness” and “light.” Since “all the earth” belongs to G-d, He chose the Jewish people simply because He wanted to. We have no voice or option. The phrase “My special treasure” alludes to this stage.

Next comes the stage of service. The Jewish people prepare for – and thus participate in – the giving of the Torah through their actions. But this Divine service has two levels. One involves things permitted by the Torah, which one uses for “the sake of heaven.” In this way allowable actions become sanctified and the nations elevated. They act as a “kingdom of kohanim,” that is, rulers who rule by shaping and molding the spiritual character of the physical world.

The other level of service, the performance of a mitzvah, is not connected with the needs of the world. This last stage parallels the phrase “a holy nation.” At this level, the Jewish people are totally set apart and separated from the world. They are wholly dedicated and devoted to serving G-d.

The middle stage, and first level of service, uses the permitted, that which belongs to us, for “the sake of heaven.” As mentioned, this parallels the meaning of “kohanim” as leaders and the phrase “a kingdom of kohanim.” The unique point of this service is that in performing it we *are not separated* from the world. On the contrary, through involvement with the world, a transformation occurs. The world itself becomes a holy thing, a receptacle for G-dliness.

Which stage or level is the true intent behind the giving of the Torah? Clearly, it must be the middle stage, the first level of service.

To be totally separated from the world, the last stage, is really the province of angels. Since the Jewish people live in the physical world, and were given the Torah in the physical world, that must be the primary location and purpose for the Revelation. That means the Jewish people must deal with the nations of the world, the matters of the world, and the evil inclination that dwells within them. A Jew must be a ruler over his own *yetzer hara* (his evil inclination), his character, and indeed his environment. He must see that all in the realm of the permitted is suffused with G-dliness.

The ability to do this was accomplished with the giving of the Torah.

We can now understand the connection with the portion of Bamidbar, whose content concerns counting. Specifically, it contains three accounts, each obviously corresponding with one of the levels of Divine service.

The first counting is that of the Jewish people as a whole, except for the tribe of Levi. This corresponds to the phrase, "My special treasure." Counting confers an importance, regardless of any inherent value. That G-d counts the Jewish people only shows that G-d has chosen them. It does not reveal any inherent value or service.

Next, the tribe of Levi is counted separately, for a specific reason. They have the special task of guarding and protecting the holy objects associated with the Tabernacle. This corresponds to "a kingdom of kohanim." As guardians, they are "rulers," so to speak, in charge of the items under their care.

Finally, the Levite men over thirty are numbered. They are set aside for service in the Tabernacle – set apart, as indicated by the phrase, "a holy nation." Indeed, the family of Kehos, enumerated at the end of the reading, carried and cared for the holiest articles. And of course Aaron and his descendants, the kohanim, came from this family.

The uniqueness of Bamidbar, the reason why this portion always precedes Shavuot, lies in the middle stage. That G-d chose us, that He numbers the Jewish people, must be the first stage. Obviously, Revelation and the covenant must proceed from G-d's Will and initiative.

What then? The Jewish people are to be a "kingdom of kohanim." They are to be spiritual rulers and leaders. The goal is to be involved in the world, transforming it into a dwelling place for G-dliness. Like the Levites, we have a special task. We are not to withdraw from the world, but lead it and guide it. This is our preparation to receive the Torah – whether for the first time at Sinai, every year following the reading of Bamidbar, or in the immediate, imminent future, when by preparing the world, we will receive the Torah of Moshiach.

Then, after the Divine service of the second stage is complete, we will reach the final stage, that of being wholly dedicated and devoted to G-d. We will be a "holy nation" and, with the coming of Moshiach, the whole world will recognize G-dliness.

(Based on Likkutei Sichos 18, pp. 18-27)

The Announcement Of The Redemption

70

It may be suggested that the Temple of the future ("it will be revealed and come from heaven already built and perfected"¹) will first be revealed in the place "That the Temple traveled and settled there"² in the time of exile ("The House of our Rebbe in Bavel"³); from there it will be transported to its place in Yerushalayim.

...Perhaps it can be said that this is alluded to in the Rambam's choice of words (in *Hilchos Melech HaMoshiach*⁴) "And build the Temple **in its place**." For apparently [there is a question]: what is the need to inform us here that the building of the Temple will be **in its place**? On the other hand, why isn't the place specified: "And build the Temple in **Yerushalayim**?" [It must be] that "in its place" alludes as well to the place of the king Moshiach in the time of exile (**before** [the status of] "behold he is certainly Moshiach"). Therefore, while he is still **in exile** (for there he sits⁵ and waits and anxiously looks forward to redeeming the Jewish people, and the Divine Presence with them in exile) the king Moshiach builds a Temple (in microcosm). This is an illustration and example of the Temple in Yerushalayim (like "the synagogue of He slipped and settled,"⁶ "that the Temple traveled and settled there."). [This

1. Rashi's commentary and Tosfos on Sukkah 41, end of side a and in other sources.

2. *Aruch*, entry Shaf (brought in the *Chiddushei Aggada MaHaRaSHA*, on *Megillah* 29a).

3. *Megillah* 29a. [In Hebrew, "Beis Rabbeinu Sh'B'Bavel". Translator's note.]

4. End of chapter 11.

5. See *Sanhedrin* 98a: "He is dwelling at the gate of Rome." [In the referenced passage, Rabbi Yehoshua ben Levi asks Eliyahu HaNavi where Moshiach can be found. The quotation actually combines the end of the question ("Where is Moshiach dwelling?") and the answer ("At the gate of Rome"). Translator's note.]

6. *Megillah* 29a. [The phrase is a reference to the Divine Presence going into exile with the Jewish people: G-d's Presence slipped away from Jerusalem and

settling serves] as a preparation for the future Temple, which will be revealed there first, and from there return (with G-d and the Jewish people) to Yerushalayim.

...Perhaps it can be said that the statement in the Midrash,⁷ that "at the time when the king Moshiach comes, **he will stand on the roof of the Beis HaMikdash** [Temple] and announce to the Jewish people, saying, Humble ones, the time for your Redemption has arrived," refers to the roof of the Beis HaMikdash which is **the Temple in microcosm** outside the land,⁸ which takes the place of the Temple in Yerushalayim ("The Temple traveled and settled there"). [This may be said] because after the future Temple is revealed and descends to the earth below, there is no need **to announce** to the Jewish people that "the time for your Redemption has arrived."

...The above can be applied to "The House of our Rebbe in Bavel" **of our generation**, the house (the synagogue and study hall) of my sainted father-in-law, the leader of our generation:

...In this generation, the last generation of exile and the first generation of Redemption, "our actions and Divine service during the time of exile"⁹ to make the lands of the nations into the land of Israel even in **the lowest possible place**, that is, **the lower hemisphere** (where the Torah was not given¹⁰) has been concluded

settled in Bavel. Translator's note.]

7. *Yalkut Shimoni, Yeshayahu, remez 499.*

8. Accordingly, the expression "He stands on the roof of the Beis HaMikdash" becomes clarified; that "roofs... do not become sanctified" (Rambam, Hilchos Beis HaBechirah, chapter 6, halacha 7). Hence this alludes to the lands outside of Israel in comparison to the holiness of the land of Israel.

9. *Tanya*, beginning of chapter 37.

10. See *Igros Kodesh of the Rebbe RaYaTZ*, vol. 2, p. 492 ff. See there for

and completed. Through the elevation of the lowest possible place all the other lands of the nations are also elevated.¹¹ This [objective] is achieved through "**Beis Rabbeinu**" [Our Rebbe's House] in the lower hemisphere, from which light goes out to all the world, to make the whole world (until the furthest corner of the world) into the land of Israel. This is the concept that "In the future the land of Israel will extend into all the lands,"¹² and "In the future, Yerushalayim will extend over all the land of Israel."¹² For then there will be established a connection between all the synagogues and study halls throughout the entire world and the Beis HaMikdash. [This will occur] in the true and complete Redemption through our righteous Moshiach, the leader of the generation, who is the Moshiach (the Redeemer of Israel) of the generation. Further, and this is also essential, he is the leader of the Torah of Chassidus,¹³ since through the spreading outward ("when your wellsprings spread forth," until there is nothing beyond, to all corners of the world) is achieved the coming of the king Moshiach.¹⁴

Therefore the greatness of "Beis Rabbeinu" can be understood. It is the essential "Temple in microcosm" of the final exile, "that the Temple traveled and settled there." Therefore, it is the actual place of the Temple of the future; not only that, but the future Temple will be revealed there, and from there return to Yerushalayim (as

cross-references.

11. "As in raising the walls of a house, it is necessary to raise the lower beam and then the upper beams will be raised automatically; this is not the case if one begins in the middle of the wall, one does not raise the lower beams" (*Torah Or Bereishis* 4, beginning of side a).

12. See *Sifrei Devarim* at the beginning, *Pesikta Rabbasi*, *Parshas Shabbos v'Rosh Chodesh*. *Yalkus Shimoni*, *Yeshayahu*, remez 503.

13. One should note that the Torah of Chassidus is the aspect of the Yechida in Torah (See the pamphlet concerning "On the essence of Chassidus), which is connected with the aspect of Yechida in Israel - the soul of our righteous Moshiach (*RaMaZ on Zohar* vol. 2, 40b and other sources).

14. *Igros Kodesh* of the *Baal Shem Tov* - *Kesser Shem Tov* at the beginning.

mentioned above).

It may be added, that this concept is also alluded to in the name¹⁵ of "Beis Rabbeinu" in our generation:

"Rabbeinu" [our Rebbe] - His two names alluded to the Redemption: His first name - Yosef - "And it shall come to pass that on that day, the L-rd shall **continue to apply** [yoseef] His hand a second time to acquire the rest of His people that will remain from Assyria and Egypt, etc. and from the islands of the sea, etc, and He shall **gather** [Asaf] the lost of Israel and the scattered ones of Judah He shall gather from the four corners of the earth."¹⁶ His second name - Yitzchak - refers to the laughter and rejoicing that will be complete in the future Redemption, and which will be completed through our righteous Moshiach. Thus it is written,¹⁷ "Then our mouths will be filled with laughter [S'chok]. It specifies "then," in the future,¹⁸ when they will say to Yitzchak (specifically), "Because you are our father."¹⁹

And **Beis** (Rabbeinu) [**The House** of our Rebbe] - its number is seven hundred seventy.²⁰ The name by which "Beis Rabbeinu" is called by all Jews has been universally accepted to be this number,

15. As is well-known, the name indicates the content and nature of the thing called with that name (*Tanya*, "*Shaar HaYichud v'HaEmunah*," end of chapter 1. See at length *Teshuvos u'Be'urim* (Kehos, 5734), section 1 and the cross references there).

16. *Yeshayahu* 11:11-12.

17. *Tehillim* 126:2.

18. Which is not the case during the time of exile, when "it is forbidden for an individual to be completely joyful [literally, fill his mouth with laughter] in this world, since it is written that "Then our mouths will be filled with laughter [we will be completely joyful]" (*Brochos* 31a).

19. *Yeshayahu* 63:16. Shabbos 89b.

20. One should note the customs of the leaders of the Jewish people, who learned allusions and lessons in Divine service from secular matters as well (for example, the number of wagons in the train, which is incidental, and all the more

"770."²¹ This number in Gematria is "**Paratzta**," derived from "You shall spread out [U'Faratzta] west and east and north and south."²² This indicates that from this house light will go forth to all four corners of the world, in a manner of **breaking through barriers**, so that all four corners of the world will be elevated to the status of the land of Israel. (In the future the land of Israel will extend to all the lands.) This means in particular that all the synagogues and study halls throughout the world will be established in the land of Israel and connected to the Beis HaMikdash in the true and complete Redemption through our righteous Moshiach. For about him it says,²³ "**You have broken barriers for yourself**," which our Sages of blessed memory explain²⁴ as follows: "This is Moshiach, about whom it is said,²⁵ "**The breaker** is come up before them."²⁶

...In the completeness of the number seven (seven hundred and seventy) can also be found an allusion to the completeness of the Divine service of our Rebbe during his complete lifetime of **seven** decades, **seventy** years (5640-5710). His Divine service was concluded and completed in the lower hemisphere in the **seventh** decade (from the house whose number is seven hundred seventy). [This completeness] includes as well the extension of his Divine service in the years afterwards, through the **seventh** generation -

so in regard to an established dwelling). This is particularly true in our case, when the number becomes **the name of** the house, as discussed below.

21. Whether in Hebrew, Yiddish or English - "Seven Seventy."

22. *VaYeitze* 28:14.

23. *VaYeshev* 38:29.

24. *Aggados Bereishis*, end of chapter 63. See *Bereishis Rabba*, end of chapter 85 and Rashi's commentary on it.

25. *Micha* 2:13.

26. One should note that "Beis Moshiach" in gematria is "Paratzta" (770). Consider this carefully. [*Gematria is the numerical analysis of words. Translator's note.*]

"all sevenths are beloved."²⁷ Through this [extension] is accomplished the completion of our actions and Divine service during the time of exile in all seven continents of the world. Immediately and imminently "the L-rd shall **continue to apply [yoseef]** His hand a second time, etc., and He shall **gather [Asaf]** the lost of Israel, etc." In this way, "**You have broken** (in Gematria, seven hundred and seventy²⁸) barriers for yourself," "The breaker is come up before them."

All this receives added emphasis in this last period:

The Divine service of spreading Torah and Judaism and the wellsprings outward from "Beis Rabbeinu" ("770") has continued and expanded with greater vigor and greater strength, even after (the last ten years of) his life in this world, for more than forty years (5710-5750). It has done so in a way that "G-d has given you a heart to know and eyes to see and ears to hear."²⁹ Thus we find that "Beis Rabbeinu" ("770") is a "fortress," "the mount that all mouths turn to,"³⁰ for more than a Yovel of years (5700-5750) - "Forever."³¹

[That Beis Rabbeinu is a "fortress"] receives further emphasis when we see with our own eyes the many Jewish people, and the increasing numbers of them, that come to "Beis Rabbeinu," with greater vigor and greater strength, - "in the multitude of people is the splendor of the king"³² (which includes also "Who are the

27. *Vayikra Rabba*, ch. 29:11. See the discourse *Basi L'Gani* of the year 5750 at the beginning. Also at length, the same-named discourse of 5751.

28. [The letters of the word "Paratzta" have the numerical value of 770: Peh=80; Reish=200; Tzadik=90; Tuv=400. Translator's note.]

29. *Tavo* 29:3.

30. *Brochos* 30a.

31. *Shmuel I* 1:22 and Rashi's commentary. *Yerushalmi Brochos*, chapter 4, halacha 1. See *Kiddushin* 15a. *Mechilta* and Rashi's commentary on *Mishpatim* 21:6.

32. *Mishlei* 14:28.

kings? the rabbis,"³³ and specifically the leader (king) of the generation). [The increase] has made it necessary to enlarge and expand "Beis Rabbeinu" further. The enlargement and expansion must be in a way that breaks through barriers, "Paratzta" (770 in Gematria), as if constructing **a new building**.³⁴

According to what was said previously concerning the pre-eminence of "Beis Rabbeinu Sh'b'Bavel" - that "the Temple traveled and settled there," and "this is the place of the actual Temple in the future," so that there the future Temple will be revealed and from there return to Yerushalayim - the great merit each and every Jew has in becoming a partner, physically and monetarily³⁵ (and all who increase are praiseworthy) in building "Beis Rabbeinu Sh'b'Bavel" is obvious. And this is like a preparation for the actual descent and revelation of the future Temple, imminently and immediately.

(Pamphlet concerning "Mikdash M'at Zeh Beis Rabbeinu Sh'B'Bavel" - Sefer HaSichos 5752, p. 465)

33. See *Gittin* 62, end of first side. *Zohar*, vol. 3, 253b in *Raya Mehemna*.

34. Including the laying of the corner stone. [*On the eve of 18 Elul 5748 was arranged the laying of the cornerstone for (increasing and expanding) the synagogue and study hall of Lubavitch in Lubavitch. The Rebbe placed the cornerstone with his holy hands. Publisher's note.*]

35. Following the example of the Beis HaMikdash, that "everyone is obligated to build and support it themselves and with their money, etc." (*Rambam, Hilchos Beis HaBechirah*, chapter 1, halacha 12).

IN LOVING MEMORY OF OUR DEAR FATHER
Reb Avraham Leib ben Reb **Yaakov ע"ה Gralnik**
On the occasion of his 9th yahrtzeit,
5 Sivan - Erev Shavuot, 5784

IN LOVING MEMORY OF OUR DEAR MOTHER
Mrs. Yehudis bas Reb **Ephraim Fishel ע"ה Gralnik**
Passed away on 8 Nissan, 5783

IN LOVING MEMORY OF OUR DEAR GRANDFATHER
Reb Ephraim Fishel ben Reb **Zev Wolf ע"ה Kissin**
Passed away on 5 Sivan - Erev Shavuot, 5750

IN LOVING MEMORY OF OUR DEAR GRANDFATHER
Reb Yaakov ben Reb **Avraham ע"ה Gralnik**
Passed away on 13 Sivan, 5753

ת. נ. צ. ב. ה.

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