

# BS”D Parashat Bamidbar 5782

## The Book of Numbers: Words and Numbers

*Tehillim 147:4:*

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*(HaShem) counts the stars; He calls each star by name*

In our galaxy the number of stars are estimated to be ten billion trillion (ten to the 21st power), and there are hundreds of billion galaxies in HaShem’s universe. Each star has a name and a number.

### Math and Words

The Creator programmed humans to think in terms of words and numbers. Our minds combine letters into words and words into rational sentences, and even the most abstract thought has to be presented as words and numbers. These are our tools with which we think and communicate.

Despite the many Torah verses to the contrary, the Almighty does not “speak” in the manner of human beings by producing

air waves. HaShem revealed the Torah to Moshe Rabbeinu and His messages to the prophets through words and numbers which HaShem made them think that they heard, just as an electrode can produce thoughts and pictures in the brain.

As Chazal revealed regarding the fourth commandment of Shabbat, where the two basic words of Shabbat; "shamor" and "zachor" were both "proclaimed" by HaShem simultaneously and were miraculously "heard" (grasped) by the nation simultaneously. This is totally impossible in our world that functions according to the laws of physics.

On the words in Tehillim 105,8:

וַיְחַלֵּט אֱלֹהִים אֶתְּמוֹתָיו לְעַמּוֹתָיו

*(HaShem waited) a thousand generations to command (His Torah)*

The midrash in several sources states that HaShem brought the Torah into being 974 generations before the creation of Bereishiet. During that "time" the Torah was in its most profound abstract form, present only in the "mind" of the Creator. An additional 26 generations after Adam and Chava were formed (bringing it to 1000 generations), the abstract Torah emanated from the deepest recesses of the spiritual world taking the form of words and numbers and was presented to Am Yisrael at Mount Sinai.

In the preferential race between words and numbers, which is more essential? One would be prone to choose words. However, at the end of the day, it is numbers that will decide the fate of each individual, and mankind at large, as Rambam states in his Laws of Tshuva 3,1:

אִם יִשְׁתַּחֲוֶה אִישׁ לְעַמּוּתוֹ, אֲנִי מְחַלְּקִים אֹתוֹ לְעַמּוּתוֹ, וְאִם יִשְׁתַּחֲוֶה אִישׁ לְאֱלֹהֵי אֱמוּנָתוֹ, אֲנִי מְחַלְּקִים אֹתוֹ לְאֱמוּנָתוֹ, וְאִם יִשְׁתַּחֲוֶה אִישׁ לְעַמּוּתוֹ, אֲנִי מְחַלְּקִים אֹתוֹ לְעַמּוּתוֹ, וְאִם יִשְׁתַּחֲוֶה אִישׁ לְאֱלֹהֵי אֱמוּנָתוֹ, אֲנִי מְחַלְּקִים אֹתוֹ לְאֱמוּנָתוֹ.

,הַיְהוָה יִשְׁפֹּט אֶת הָעָם ,הַיְהוָה יִשְׁפֹּט אֶת הָעָם  
.הַיְהוָה יִשְׁפֹּט אֶת הָעָם

*Every person has merits and demerits, virtues, and failings. One whose merits outnumber his demerits is a tzaddik (righteous), he whose demerits outnumber his merits is evil. If they are in total balance the individual is classified as bai'nani... This principle applies to nations and indeed to all mankind.*

Every mitzva has qualitative differences dependent on an individual's kavana (intent) and the circumstances surrounding the observance. So, the calculation of one's life can be accomplished only by the Creator. Each stage of a mitzva has a number to distinguish it from another stage. HaShem assumes the role of accountant, assessor, evaluator, mathematician, and digital computer.

At the end of the day, it is math that determines how we have functioned in this world.

## **It's the Math that Counts**

The above is actually an introduction to the mathematic message I want to send to my Kohanic brothers in galut.

When a Kohen blesses the community he is performing a Torah mitzva (Bamidbar 6:22-24):

וְהִשְׁמַע הַיְהוָה אֶת הַקּוֹהֵן וְהִשְׁמַע אֶת הָעָם וְהָיָה שְׁמֵי הַיְהוָה עִלְיָהּ וְהָיָה הַיְהוָה עִלְיָהּ  
וְהָיָה הַיְהוָה עִלְיָהּ וְהָיָה הַיְהוָה עִלְיָהּ ,וְהָיָה הַיְהוָה עִלְיָהּ  
...וְהָיָה הַיְהוָה עִלְיָהּ .וְהָיָה

*And HaShem spoke unto Moses, saying: 'Speak unto Aaron and unto his sons, saying: You shall bless the children of Israel; yoy shall say unto them: HaShem bless...*

Every year I recite the Kohanic blessing here in Eretz Yisrael over 400 times (365 days plus all the musaf prayers). In ten years it amounts to over 4000 Torah mitzvot, and since I arrived here it amounts to over 24,000 times. In the Ashkenaz communities in the US (apart from some of the Sephardic ones) the Kohanic blessing is said only during musaf on Yom Tov when it is not Shabbat. So, the maximum number – would be 15 times a year. In ten years 150, and after 60 years 900 times; leaving Kohanim in Eretz Yisrael ahead by 23,100 times more.

And who can assess what one single Torah mitzva is worth!

Many halachic authorities including Sefer Chareidim by Harav Elazar Azkari of Tzfat, state that the community that receives the Kohanic blessing also performs a Torah mitzva.

As impressive as they may be, these numbers pale in front of the Torah mitzvot that one achieves by just living in the holy land.

So, when you make out your IRS tax form this year, make an additional one for your acquired mitzva assets verses the potential assets which have been lost.

Remember: when it comes down to it – it's the math that counts in each individual's Book of Numbers.

Shabbat Shalom

Nachman Kahana

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