



לעילוי נשמת מלכה בת הרב מאיר ע"ה sponsored This week

## **Gem of the Week from RSR" H**

### **Every Man Counts**

Sefer Bamidbar opens with the command to take a census of the *eida*. Each member of the nation must be counted, and become aware that he counts. We pass under the staff of the Shepherd, every man counted as an independent member of the flock.

Why count in the desert? To prove that the purpose of the census was neither economic nor political. Economics and politics are irrelevant in the wilderness. Rather, the census was taken for the sake of the Torah: first it was given; then it found its resting place in the *ohel moed*; and now, in Iyar, the *shevatim* are counted for its sake. From now on, they camp encircling the Torah, its guardians and keepers.

*Eida* is a word denoting people who join together for the sake of a common cause—i.e., a community. Individuals become a community not through an order imposed on them by the outside, but through a shared concern that drives them from within their own hearts.

However, individual men do not form a community. The people were counted *lemishpechosam*, for the community consists of *shevatim*, and each *shevet* consists of families. Accordingly, the men are counted according to their families, and the families according to their tribes. The tribes together form *adas bnei Yisrael*.

This is the uniqueness of Jewish nationalism. The nation as a whole is considered one house, *beis Yisrael*, and its members are called the children of one man, *bnei Yisrael*. At the same time, however, individual units remain, encompassed by a larger whole. This ensures that the concept of a Jewish nation does not become abstract. We are united by a common element, and each of us is an integral part.

Under the influence of this unity, a diverse group is nurtured. Each tribe expresses its own unique character trait, demonstrating that man's Divine mission is not impeded by any particular occupation. *V'shamru derech Hashem laasos tzedakah u'mishpat* does not hinge on courage, business acumen, intellect, or anything else. Warriors like the tribe of Yehuda, merchants like Zevulun, scholars like Yissachar, farmers like Asher—are all called upon to fulfill a common mission, each through his own way of life.

Each tribe, with its uniqueness, and each family, with its special qualities, work at one common task. They give it form, educate their children to it, and pass it on to the next generation. That's why hundreds of thousands of *bnei Yisrael* come not as a disorganized multitude, but *lemishpechos beis avosam*, as families, grouped according to their tribes.

Have a wonderful Shabbos,

Moshe Pogrow,  
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This week's email, like every "Gem of the Week," is based on excerpts from the commentary of R' Shamshon Raphael Hirsch zt"l on Chumash, with permission from the publisher.