



Ataya Ness-Aiver
Raanana Chapter
Madrich

**One rock. You
rock. Three rock
four.**

“One rock. Two rocks. Three rocks. Ooh! That one is colorful.... Four rocks....” If I were to be taking a forty yearlong hike through sandy, scorching hot territory, rocks would be my best friend, my key to sanity amongst the never ending rolling hills of nothingness. But I am not G-d. “And G-d spoke to Moshe, in the desert of Sinai...on the first of the second month in the second year of them leaving Egypt, saying: ‘Count the heads of the Children of Israel...’ (Numbers 1:1). The desert is classically the home of the recluse, the spiritual seeker who finds the Infinite depth of spiritual silence amongst its many stones. But now hundreds of thousands, if not millions of people are finding themselves amongst the nothingness. What to do now? Not a month before, G-d rested his Presence amongst the Jewish people with the establishment of the Mishkan, G-d’s

“dwelling” in the physical. Now, says Rashi, in the second month, G-d sends us a message. “You are important to me”. “You are what this desert is about, what these forty years and resting of My Presence is about. Each one, I shall count, (or, literally translated, raise up the head).” In life, we may find ourselves stripped of our comforts, of our external crutches. We may find ourselves forced to find and build a home for G-d’s Presence from within, when nothing around us seems to be helping. But always remember, says G-d, that when the time is rough, when all you feel is a crushing weight of pain and judgments that “I’m not good enough” and “I’m incapable” - *I love you. You ARE valuable.* Feel it. And build from there.

As the Shechina rested on Har Sinai, may it continue to rest within us every year and all the time! Shabbat Shalom!

Nomi Caplan
12th Grade, Raanana

Bamidbar begins by talking about the census of the Jewish People in the desert. This relates nicely to Shavuot, since Shavuot is a festival we reach after counting the Omer. It also relates nicely to Shavuot since Shavuot celebrates the giving of the Torah at Har Sinai at which point the Jewish people committed the sin of the Golden Calf. This unfortunate

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event was followed by the death of many of Bnei Yisroel, followed by a census.

The parsha goes on to detail all of the Tribes of Israel excluding the tribe of Levi. Why is Levi excluded from this census? Perhaps the answer is because they were given a special status as a reward for their refraining from participating in the sin of the Golden Calf. The Tribe of Levi was to replace the first born with regard to all of the holy tasks to be performed in the Mishkan and the Beit Hamikdash. This shows us a concrete example of the long term rewards which we can receive as a result of resisting temptations to join in with the crowd when they are doing something bad – however attractive it may seem at the time.

Another interesting idea in parshat Bamidbar can be found in Chapter 3. We are told that these are the תולדות of Aharon and Moshe. Then, we are told only about the sons of Aharon. There is no mention of Moshe's biological sons. One answer can be found in the Gemara in Sanhedrin which says that since Moshe taught them Torah he was like their father. Another answer we are told is that Moshe prayed and saved the lives of two of Aharon's sons after the sin of the Golden Calf and therefore Moshe was like a father to them. There are many lessons that we can learn from this but that would be a shiur in itself!

Shabbat Shalom ■

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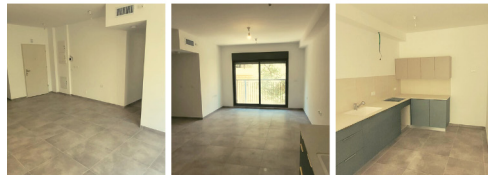


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