

A LESSON FROM THE PARASHA

Count Me In




RABBI
MICHAEL
SOROKA

This Shabbos we begin reading *sefer* Bamidbar, also known by the name mentioned in *chazal*, *Chumash Hapikudim*, loosely translated as “the book of numbers.” Simply put, the rationale is as the Netziv explains: *klal Yisroel* is counted twice during the course of this *sefer*, now, in this parasha, and then again in Parshas Pinchos.

So, is that it? That makes it worthy of being called by this name? There has got to be more to the name, “Numbers.” In *Loshon Hakodesh* the word to count is *pikod*. This word is also very closely related to the word *tafkid*, which means a specific purpose, or a mission. As we stood at Har Sinai we received our mission when we received the Torah “*k’ish echad b’lev echad*.” As one unified nation, with a unified goal, we became the *Am Hanivchar*, the chosen nation, together as one.

At the same time, however, the message of the book of Numbers—the counting of each

and every Jew individually—symbolizes that we are each unique. We each fill a specific role, a specific *tafkid*—our specific mission. Our stories are up to each of us to write for ourselves, and no one else can fill my shoes for me.

The soul of a person intuitively understands this naturally. Different people are drawn to different spiritual endeavors, to specific *mitzvot* or even specific areas of *chesed* (acts of kindness). Simultaneously, we are also pushed from within ourselves to express this individuality in trivial matters, in external ways, attempting to satisfy our “individualistic urges” that way. The goal however, is to reach deep within and find that spiritual lofty endeavor that touches our souls and fills the piece of the puzzle of *Am Yisrael* that only “I” can fulfill. 

Kollel Pre-Shavuot Learning Program



A TIMELY HALACHA

RABBI CHAIM HEINEMANN

The Concept of Citywide Eruvin

Most contemporary towns are not surrounded by physical walls and instead utilize the concept of *tzuras hapesach*, form of door way (which is comprised of two side posts with a crossbeam placed above the two side posts) for their *eruv*.

A conventional *eruv* of *tzuras hapesach* cannot be constructed to enclose and allow carrying in a *reshus harabim* (public domain). Considering that there are various opinions as to what constitutes a *reshus harabim* (streets that are 16 *amos* wide or the presence of 600,000 people), there was a debate amongst the *poskim* whether large cities qualify and whether to permit community *eruvim* or not.

It has been universally accepted for hundreds of years that *eruvim* be built to enclose entire cities. In pre-WWII Europe, it was considered the responsibility of each *rav* of a community to ensure that his city had a valid *eruv*. The town of Radin itself, the home of the Chofetz Chayim, had an *eruv* around it.

At the same time, it was also accepted that *balei nefesh* (scrupulous individuals) can be stringent if they so desire, and are not viewed as people who are questioning a long-standing *minhag*.

Some of the more recent American rabbanim were opposed to citywide *eruvim* for various reasons:

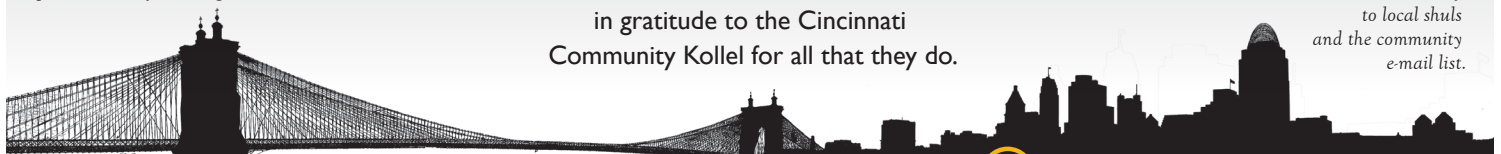
Unlike in Europe, the cities in America are larger which result in more leniencies.

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A TIMELY HALACHA

CONTINUED

Back in the day, everybody relied on one central oven to keep their Shabbos food hot. Today, the need to carry is less.

Children growing up accustomed to an eruv won't even know that it is forbidden to carry outside on Shabbos. (R' Ahron Kotler and R' Y Kamenetsky)

However, R' Moshe Feinstein and others strongly believed in upholding the previously accepted *minhag* with an emphasis on upholding the highest standards. (We all can appreciate the tremendous *oneg* Shabbos that an *eruv* brings and the fact that it saves many others who are unfortunately not Shabbos observant). Nevertheless, he did not always support the construction of citywide *eruvim*. R' Moshe felt that each *eruv* should determine for his respective city what the effect of an *eruv* would be as well as the likelihood that the *eruv* would remain properly supervised.

R' Moshe Heinemann told me that before he constructed and supervised/oversaw the *eruv* in Baltimore (and, subsequently, in over 50 different cities throughout the US including here in Cincinnati back in 1986), he asked and was encouraged by R' Feinstein to do so. 

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At the Kollel


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Sunday *Free brunch!*

 **Beginner's Halacha & More**
(skills-building)
Rabbi Moshe D. Zeffren. 9:30–10:30 AM

 **Shivti** (Self-contained learning,
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Rabbi Avrohom Weinrib.. 10 AM–noon



Monday

 **Torah Treasures for
Seniors at the Mayerson JCC**
Rabbi Yitzchok Preis..... 10:30–11:15 AM



Tuesday


  **Partners in Torah
at the Mayerson JCC**
Rabbi Michael Soroka 8 PM

Wednesday

  **Downtown Lunch-n-Learn
at Strauss & Troy**
Rabbi Yitzchok Preis..... 12–1 PM

Thursday

  **Yehoshua/Shabbos**
in the former Back Office
Rabbis Michael Soroka and
Moshe Dovid Zeffren..... 9:10–10 PM

 **Leil Shishi
Halacha Chabura**
for boys in grades 7–8,
with the occasional kumzits
Rabbi Moshe Fuchs 8:15–9 PM

 *Homemade refreshments served*

KEY:  Beginners  Intermediate  Advanced  for men and women

Chavrusos are available for private and group learning—
speak to Rabbi Chaim Heinemann! weekdays noon–1 PM • Sun.–Thurs. 8–9:45 PM


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GREAT ACTS OF ORDINARY PEOPLE

AS IS COMMONPLACE IN MANY YESHIVOS IN ISRAEL, Meir called a family he knew and inquired if they could host him for a Shabbos meal. His host-to-be invited him for the Friday night meal and mentioned that that he could also bring along a friend, but he should just let them know. Meir asked around if anyone wanted to join him, but his friends already had plans. In the midst of Friday afternoon preparations, Meir's friend Yitzi asked if the meal was still available. Meir tried to reach his host for that night, but to no avail. Making a judgment call, Meir told Yitzi to come along to the shul where his host was davening, and he'd inform his host of the added guest. He was sure it would be okay.


Meir approached his host in shul before Kab-

balas Shabbos and explained that, in the end, he did have a friend with him. The host reassured Meir that it would be just fine. Several minutes later, Meir noticed his host slip out of shul.

Meir and Yitzi located their host after davening, and all three walked to the apartment. When they arrived, Meir scanned the table and noticed that there was a place set for Yitzi. Putting the pieces together, Meir realized his host must have run home to add a place setting to make sure the extra guest would not feel uncomfortable. Thinking further, Meir realized that perhaps it was to spare the wife's angst from feeling unprepared. No matter, it was definitely food for thought for Meir about the sensitivity one should have to others. 

TIDBITS OF CINCINNATI JEWISH HISTORY

RABBI MOSHE TZVI CRYSTAL

On the 2nd of Sivan, 5581 (1821), the first Jew was born in Cincinnati. He was a boy named Frederick A. Johnson born to David Israel and Eliza Johnson. David and Eliza hailed from Plymouth, England, and had followed David's brother Phineas to America in 1818. Phineas was an Indian trader who lived west of Cincinnati and convinced his brother to join him. David found he didn't much like living on the frontier and moved with his wife to Cincinnati in 1820. Frederick was actually their third child, having had one in England and one on the frontier. The Johnsons were one of the few original Jewish settlers to come Cincinnati as a married couple. The Johnsons were actively involved in the establishment of the Cincinnati Jewish community, taking part in the establishment of the first synagogue and the first cemetery. 

Source: SARNA, JONATHAN AND NANCY H. KLEIN, THE JEWS OF CINCINNATI. CENTER FOR THE STUDY OF THE AMERICAN JEWISH EXPERIENCE, 1989.

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