

GREAT FOR SHARING  
AT THE SHABBOS TABLE!

PARSHAS  
BAMIDBAR

# בשבת

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## TORAH TROOPS

**P**arshas Bamidbar features a census taken by Moshe Rabbeinu, a counting of the males, ages twenty to sixty. However, when it came to the Shevet of Levi, Moshe Rabbeinu was told to include children as young as thirty days old!<sup>1</sup>

Why the discrepancy? Why was Moshe commanded to count the young children of Levi?

Rashi,<sup>2</sup> quoting the Medrash<sup>3</sup> explains that Shevet Levi was “The Legion of Hashem,” and therefore deserved to be counted at such a young age. The Medrash elaborates — the members of Shevet Levi were always and constantly learning Hashem’s Torah. Wherever one went, at any time, day or night, one could find members of Shevet Levi learning Torah. Thus, they received the appellation of “Hashem’s Legion.”

But what does this honorific have to do with the counting? Certainly children at the age of thirty days were not spending their days and nights learning Torah!

The Sifsei Chachamim<sup>4</sup> (Shabsai ben Yosef Bass, 1641–1718) explains that even the young children, though they were not yet learning Torah, were considered as impactful as any other member of Klal Yisrael. This is because they were part of a group of those who learn Torah; they themselves were destined to grow up and be amongst those who spend their days and years steeped in Torah.

Praiseworthy are those dwell in Your house!<sup>5</sup> How special, how extraordinary, how exceptional are those who devote themselves to the study of Torah! As the Rambam writes, anyone can choose to be like the tribe of Levi.<sup>6</sup> As well, every army needs a supply corps, people who can provide everything needed to those on the front lines. Those special people, people who send their children to yeshiva, support those who learn Torah, and celebrate the study of Hashem’s Law are included in those who benefit from all the Torah has to offer.<sup>7</sup>

1 Bamidbar 1:49

2 *ibid.* s.v. אך את מטה

3 Medrash Tanchuma, Bamidbar 16

4 *ibid.* s.v. נמנה לבדו

5 Tehillim 84:5

6 Rambam, Hilchos Shemittah V’Yovel, 13:13

7 Yaaros Devash 1

**How special, how extraordinary, how exceptional are those who devote themselves to the study of Torah!**

### Mind the Gap - Taking the Next Step

It’s not necessarily easy to feel excited or proud to be amongst those who study or support Torah. Not every mother who sends their children to yeshiva is given an award, and not every person who sends money to a yeshiva is given an honor.

How, then, can we imbue ourselves with a sense of importance, of honor, and of pride, when it comes to learning Torah?

A common pitfall is assigning relative value to the things that we do. The more unique something is, we think, the more exceptional it is. Conversely, if it is something that, “everyone is doing,” then its value is tarnished.

The truth is, though, that the value of Torah learning is not affected by anyone else — each person’s Torah learning sustains the world, and that life sustaining ability is inherent in the Torah, regardless of how many others are doing the same.<sup>1</sup>

A child learning Chumash, or an elderly scholar learning the intricacies of Gemara can feel proud, knowing that they are the force keeping the world going.

1 Nefesh HaChaim, 4:11

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**“**  
**My brothers and sons! I have already mentioned many times to learn Torah for its sake, and the main point is to set specific times for Torah study, and especially the study of sifrei Mussar, as in the exile we are left only with our Torah.** - Reb Yonasan Eibshutz, Yaaros Devash 2:14

# THE MOST IMPORTANT GUESTS

Tzvi Krolik\* was your average run-of-the-mill *yeshiva bachur*, learning in *yeshiva* in his early twenties. After high school he made the decision to 'stay in learning,' as they say, much like many of his friends had done. And, like his friends, he was still looking at a couple of more years in *yeshiva* before he would decide whether he wanted a career, or continue in learning.

A couple of years prior, Tzvi had the merit of sitting near Meir Ostrover, a very nice young man a few years Tzvi's senior. Over the years they had become friends, and though the *yeshiva* was large, they would often have a friendly word for each other.

Thus, it came as no surprise when Meir invited Tzvi over for a Friday night meal. Meir was already married, and lived just across the street from the *yeshiva*. It was a great idea — a meal with friends, a couple of other *bachurim* from *yeshiva*, and a short walk! Perfect.

After *maariv*, Tzvi and his friends made their way to Meir's apartment. They arrived, were quickly seated, and *kiddush* was made. The meal followed the standard formula, everybody washed their hands, Meir made *hamotzi*, and Mrs. Goldie Ostrover served an appetizer.

The conversation was pleasant, shifting from Torah topics, to various goings-on in *yeshiva*. At one point, Mrs. Ostrover came in from the kitchen, two plates in her hands. Each plate already had the main course and various sides placed upon the dish, all tastefully arranged. "I think they call it French buffet," she said with a shrug. "We usually don't serve like this, but tonight we have *yeshiva bachurim*."

Tzvi froze. He was sure Mrs. Ostrover was going to end her sentence with, "...have guests," but she didn't. "Have *yeshiva bachurim*," was what she said. He paused, somewhat lost in his thoughts. All his life, he kind of went with the flow. Sure, he enjoyed learning Torah, and felt it important. But staying in *yeshiva* was simply how he was brought up, and all of his friends were doing the same. Never had he thought it was something special or unique. He certainly didn't think it made him important!

But Mrs. Ostrover's words made him think; they made him proud. Yes, learning in *yeshiva* is indeed something special, and he was grateful for the opportunity to do so.

The rest of the meal passed pleasantly, and as Tzvi left, he thanked his hosts, "The food was great, but the conversation was truly wonderful."

*\*Based on a true story, names have been changed.*

## DID YOU KNOW?

- Even those who simply sit and listen to a *shiur* are included in those who are, 'exalted in this world, and the next.'<sup>1</sup>
- Delving deep into the explanation of what one is learning is the main aspect of Torah learning.<sup>2</sup>
- Not only is clarity in learning essential for understanding, but it is an excellent method to remember what one has learned.<sup>3</sup>

1 *Devarim Rabbah* 7:1

2 *Ohr HaChaim* on *Bamidbar* 26:23, s.v. ואומר לישוב

3 *Lechem Shomayim* on *Avos* 6:6, s.v. מתיישב לבו

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