

If Everyone Would Recognize Their Unique Role And Mission In This World, There Would Be No Discord!!!

» The Purpose Of The Degalim

In this week's Parshah, Hashem Yisborach commands Moshe to arrange the camps of the shevatim in a manner in which each individual shevet was camped separately under their own flag. This is stated in the verse (2:2): "Each man under his banner according to the insignias their fathers house shall the children of Yisroel camp." The Torah delineates in which location and to which direction each shevet was encamped with their individual insignias.

We find that Medrashim place much importance on the ideas behind the flags. In Bamidbor Rabbah (2:3) it states: "The Holy One Blessed be He loved them with a great love and He made them flags like the ministering angels so that they should be recognizable. How do we know that this is a sign of love to Yisroel? Shlomo said (Shir Hashirim 2:4): 'Bring me to the house of wine and Your flag will be Your love upon me.'"

The Medrash continues: "At the time when the Holy One Blessed be He revealed Himself on Har Sinai, 24,000 angels descended with Him, as it is stated (Tehillim 68:18): 'The chariot of G-d is twice ten thousand.' And they all had flags, as it is stated (Shir Hashirim 5:10): 'Flagged with thousands of angels.' When Yisroel saw that the angels were arranged according to flags, they too began to desire flags. The Holy One Blessed be He told them: If you want flags, I promise that I shall fulfill your request. Immediately, He told Moshe to make them the flags they desired."

The Medrash Tanchuma (Bamidbor 11) adds: "'Each man by his tent', this is what is stated in the verse (Shir Hashirim 6:10): 'Who is this that appears like the dawn, beautiful as the moon.' Yisroel was holy and great with their flags, and all the gentiles looked at them and were amazed and said, 'Who is this that appears like the dawn.' The gentiles said (ibid 7:1), 'Turn, turn, oh Shulamith' – turn to us and we shall make you our leaders and

rulers. Yisroel said to them: What can you give us? Can you give us the greatness Hashem Yisborach gave us in the desert by giving each tribe its flag?" The Medrash concludes by saying that we see from here that the flags were a great honor for the nation.

The Medrash further states (Shir Hashirim Rabbah 2:1): "The assemblage of Yisroel says: The Holy One Blessed be He brought us to a large chamber of wine – this is Sinai. There, I saw Michael and his flag, Gavriel and his flag, and I saw the Heavenly ceremonies and I loved them. At that time, the Holy One Blessed be He said to Moshe: Since the desire of my son is to camp with flags, let him camp with flags. This is as is stated, 'Each man by his flag.'"

We may wonder what the greatness of the flags was. Why did the nation desire them so much? And how do the flags symbolize Hashem's love for nation? Furthermore, if the nation wished to be like the angels, why did they specifically desire their flags? Couldn't they have been like angels without flags?

We see in the Medrashim that there was a strict rule that the camps of the shevatim had to be separated and each had to stay in the location they were placed. Vayikroh Rabbah (32:3, cited in Rashi Vayikroh 25:10) brings a story of a man who camped with the Shevet of Dan because his mother was from Dan. He was brought to Bais Din, who ruled that one must camp with his father's shevet. We see that the rule was enforced very strictly.

We also see from the aforementioned Medrash that says, "the Holy One Blessed be He brought us to a large chamber of wine – this is Sinai. There, I saw Michael and his flag... Hashem said to Moshe: Since the desire of my son is to camp with flags, let him camp with flags." that there is some connection between the Torah and the flags. One may simply say that the nation saw the flags at Har Sinai and began to desire them. However, it would appear that this wasn't merely a coincidence and there is some connection between the two.

לעילוי נשמת הרה"צ אלחנן יוסף בן שמואל זצ"ל

» *The Flags Symbolized The Essence Of The Shevet!*

Rashi explains the flags by saying: "Each division had a colored sheet hanging from it. The color of one was not like the color of another. The color of each was like the hue of the stone which represents that tribe in the Choshen. Thus, every person will recognize his division." The Ramban adds that each flag had 201 symbols on it. The ancient commentators say that the flag of Reuven had the picture of a man and duda'im flowers dyed onto it. The flag of Yehuda had the picture of a lion because that is what Yaakov likened him to (Bereishis 49:9). The flag of Efraim had a picture of an ox, as that is what is likened to (Devarim 33:17). The flag of Dan had the picture of an eagle, which looked like the keruvim made by the prophet Yechezkel."

We see that each flag symbolized the spiritual essence of a shevet.

The Mashgiach, Hagaon Rav Yeruchim Levovitz zt"l (Da'as Torah) explains that each individual angel has his own unique mission. This is the literal translation of the word "malach" – an emissary to do one specific task. Each angel has his own flag that symbolizes his task. No angel can intermingle with another, and each one is kept separate, as each one must be focused on his unique task. Each angel is completely independent of all others.

Klal Yisroel desired flags like the angels had because they realized that they too had unique, individual missions. They understood that each shevet had its own mission in the world. Each one needed a flag to show that they are the symbol of this specific spiritual task.

For this reason, explains Rav Yeruchim, the shevatim camped separately from each other. Each shevet had its own flag and its own quarters, and they did not intermingle. They remained distinct and independent of each other, as each one had a unique mission and unique spiritual tasks that could only be done by them and which had no relevance to the others.

» *The "Klal" Is Made Up Of Many "Pratim"*

We can explain this concept in simpler terms by analyzing another part of this week's Parshah. The verses in the Parshah first list the count of each shevet individually. Later, (1:46 and 2:34) the verses state the sum total of all of the shevatim. Why is it necessary to add up the total?

When Yaakov blessed his sons before his death (Bereishis 49:28), it is stated: "He blessed them, each according to their appropriate blessing he blessed them." Rashi explains that the verse specifically uses the plural tense because he gave each a unique, individual blessing that will come to fruition in the future. To Yehuda he gave

the strength of the lion. To Binyomin he gave the ability to tear apart of the wolf. To Naftali he gave the lightness of the gazelle. He blessed each one individually, but he also included each one in all of the blessings, and that is why the plural tense is used.

We see that Yaakov gave all the shevatim a unified blessing, and we can discern a lesson from this about the benefit of being part of the public as a whole. However, he also blessed each one individually, which teaches us the importance for each person to retain his uniqueness and distinct traits. This will actually strengthen the general public, since each individual will utilize his unique attributes to fill specific needs for the public. Together, all of these individual strengths will join together to form one strong and sturdy entity.

We find this same concept regarding the offerings brought by the Nesi'im. The Torah lists (Bamidbar 7:12) all of the karbonos of the Nesi'im individually, even though they all brought the exact same items and it simply could have written it once and said that each one brought the same korban. We see that, as we have stated, since each one had his own unique thoughts and intentions that were unique to his own spiritual essence, they are each listed separately.

In this vein, Rav Chaim Vital zt"l writes in his sefer (Shar Hakavanos, Derushei Alenu L'Shabeach V'Nusach Hatefillah 1) in the name of Arizal that there are 12 windows in the Heavens - one for each shevet. Each shevet's prayers ascend through the window that is designated for that shevet. Since each shevet's prayer are different, each one needs its personal gate. Each shevet's prayers come from the root of that shevet's soul, and they therefore are different from each other.

He concludes by saying: Therefore, every person should hold firmly to the customs of his forefathers and pray in the manner that they prayed. One's prayers will not ascend to the Heavens if he changes from his family's manner in which they pray.

Also in this vein, the Chofetz Chaim asked why every community has its own version of the prayers and each place has a unique manner in serving Hashem. Why isn't there one single version of the prayers that everyone could use?

He answered by explaining that a military needs many divisions to be successful in warfare. It needs ground troops, navy troops, infantry and so on. So too, in order to be victorious in our war against the evil inclination, we need many "divisions".

Some people learn Torah more in-depth, while others learn faster. Some are more focused on prayer, and some are more focused on improving their fear of Heaven. Each individual is drawn to serve Hashem according to the root of his own soul. Similarly, each community has its own,

unique way to serve Hashem, and the same is true of each individual. But every division of the nation is a vital part in our army.

Why Tzadikim Will Be “Burned At The Canopy Of Their Friend”

The Gemara in Bava Basra (75A) says: Everyone will be burned by reason of (his envy of the) the canopy of his friend (in the next world)... They said the face of Moshe is like the face of the sun, the face of Yehoshua is like the face of the moon. Alas, for such shame! Alas for such reproach!

The Maharsha asks why “everyone” will be envious of their friends’ portion in the next world. It would seem that only those who lacked enough merits would have a need to be envious. He also asks: What is reason behind the double expression of, “Alas for such shame! Alas for such reproach!”

The Maharsha answers by stating that each tzadik has unique attributes and excels in certain mitzvos more than his peers. Therefore, they all feel shame in some way, as each knows that their peer is superior to them in some way. The Gemara’s intent is that everyone will be burned by their friend’s canopy, because they will all be inferior to their friend in some way, as everyone excels in some area.

However, the Maharsha continues, they say, “Alas for the shame! Alas for the reproach!”, when referring to a person who has no distinctive attributes that he excels in. It was said of Yehoshua that he had part of Moshe’s greatness, but not all of it. He was inferior to Moshe in Torah, and in this regard his face was like the moon while Moshe’s was like the face of the sun, but he merited entering the Land and conquering it, which Moshe could not do. However, for someone who has no distinctive attributes, we say, “Alas for the shame! Alas for the reproach!”

We see again that everyone has unique talents and unique areas they excel in. Therefore, everyone has an individual mission that only he can perform and he must try to understand his personal mission and work on excelling at it.

Every angel realizes that he has a unique mission that only he can do. They all love each other and are not joyous

of each other, and they accept the yoke of Heaven as one, with each focusing on his unique mission and purpose. So too, every person must realize that everyone has a unique role to play, and no one has any reason to interfere in his friend’s mission. Therefore, everyone must love each other and accept Hashem’s Torah together as one united public, with each individual focused solely on his personal mission. If we all would do this, there would be no reason for any discord or strife.

The root of all discord is when a person leaves his mission and mixes into another person’s. If each individual would focus on his own mission, there would be no cause for disputes. This also applies in the relationship of marriage. Husbands and wives have distinctive roles to play in the home. Disputes between them only arise when one side mixes into the affairs of the other.

This is the explanation regarding the connection between receiving the Torah on Har Sinai and the flags of the shevatim. At Har Sinai, when the nation received the Torah from Hashem, they reached a level of being “one nation with one heart.” They then were able to set up the flags in the desert, which symbolized the avoidance of any semblance of fighting or discord when everyone recognizes their unique place and respects the unique place of his friends.

In conclusion, it is appropriate to cite a story related by Rav Moshe Aharon Stern zt”l, Mashgiach of Yeshivas Keminetz in Eretz Yisroel. He related that a young married scholar once told him that he learns all day in Kollel, and at night he learns Mishnah Berurah. His wife wanted him to learn Gemara, Tosfos, and Rosh at night, as well as Mishnah Berurah. Rav Stern did not know what to respond, so he sent the couple to Hagaon Rav Shach zt”l to seek his advice.

Rav Shach took out a piece of cake and told the wife to taste it. He then took out a second piece of cake and told her to taste that one. He asked her if she tasted any difference between the two pieces of cake. She answered that the first one needed a bit more sugar, and the second a bit more salt.

Rav Shach responded to her, “I see you know how to bake and cook very well. You should stay in your area of expertise, which is cooking and baking, and allow your husband to make the decisions in his Torah studies, which is his area of expertise.”

... Every angel realizes that he has a unique mission that only he can do. They all love each other and are not jealous of each other..., with each focusing on his unique mission and purpose. So too, every person must realize that everyone has a unique role to play...