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# PARSHA

# ENCOUNTERS

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Parshas Bamidbar - Rabbi Meir Leib Mandelbaum

## The Many and the Great

In *parshas Bamidbar*, Hashem instructs Moshe to count Bnei Yisroel “*B’mispar shaimos*,” “according to the number of names.” The words “*mispar*” and “*shaimos*” have very different meanings. The term “*mispar*” refers to the sum total; the greatness of the number depends on the sum of all of its parts, so that the power of the individual is only recognized through its connection to the whole. The term “*sheimos* - names,” on the other hand, recognizes the unique standing of each individual. The Torah’s count of the Yidden here in *parshas Bamidbar* considers both factors: namely, the distinct worth of each individual and the power of the *tzibur*, the public.

The Seforno notes an interesting difference between this count and the one in *parshas Pinchas*. This counting of the generation who had departed Mitzrayim was to be “according to the number of names” (using both the terms “*mispar*” and “*shaimos*”), while that future count of the generation entering Eretz Yisroel only mentions numbers (“take the sum”). The Slonimer Rav addresses this discrepancy, highlighting a crucial difference between the *avodos* of the two generations. In Egypt, the Yidden had sunk to the forty-ninth level of impurity; the *avodah* of that generation, therefore, needed to be in the realm of “*Sur meirah*,” separating from bad.

This type of *avodah* requires a specific approach, as demonstrated by Yosef in his dialogue with Aishes Potephar. The *pasuk* states “*Vatispishu b’bigdo*,” literally translated as “and she grabbed him by his clothes.” This phrase can also be read as “*b’bgidaso*,” “by his rebellious behavior,” meaning his *aveiros*. She tried to convince him to sin by arguing, “You’ve already done this *aveirah* and that *aveirah*, so why should one more *aveirah* matter now?” This is the argument of the *yetzer horah*. Yosef HaTzaddik taught us a great lesson through his reply, “No one is greater in this house than

me.” One needs to perceive one’s self as great, even greater than he may actually be, because this perception enables one to realize how unbecoming it would be for him to stoop from his greatness to do an *aveirah*. This is the way to succeed in “*Sur meirah*.”

The opposite approach should be employed when preparing to perform a *mitzvah*, “*Asei tov*.” Then, one cannot rest on one’s laurels, satisfied that he has already done many *mitzvos*. Instead of feeling accomplished, he should focus on the merits he still lacks and the many *mitzvos* he has yet to fulfill.

At the time of the count in *parshas Bamidbar*, Bnei Yisroel needed much *chizuk* before beginning their *avodah* of separating from the impurity of Mitzrayim. The mention of their names at that time reminded them of their greatness and encouraged them. The generation that was entering Eretz Yisroel had already torn themselves away from the *tumah* of Mitzrayim but needed to prepare themselves to fulfill all the *mitzvos* of the Torah, hence the abridged wording of their counting.

It is well known that the *ba’alei hamussar* pursue various paths in their desire for improvement. Novardok stresses the lowness of man, while Slabodka focuses on the greatness of man. According to the discussion above, it would seem that each method has its proper place.

As we approach Shavuot, let us be *mechazek* ourselves in our *kiyum hamitzvos* of “*Sur meirah*” and “*Asei tov*,” and be *zocheh* to an uplifting *Kabbolas HaTorah*.

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# HALACHA ENCOUNTERS

## Cooking on Yom Tov

Rabbi Shlomo Francis

Cooking on Yom Tov is included in *melechtes ochel nefesh*, food-related work, and is therefore permitted on Yom Tov. However, there are many laws that limit the circumstances when one may apply the dispensation of *ochel nefesh*. Even food-related *melachos* may be forbidden *mid'oraisa* if these laws are not adhered to.

### **Ochel Nefesh that Could Have Been Done Before Yom Tov**

According to the Ohr Zarua, any *melacha* that could have been done before Yom Tov without any compromise to the finished product may not be performed on Yom Tov. *Chaza/were* concerned that if one were to leave all the permitted food preparation for Yom Tov, it would be time consuming and would detract from *simchas* Yom Tov. For example, most foods taste better when freshly cooked; therefore, they may be cooked on Yom Tov. Certain foods, such as cooked fruits, gefilte fish, or Jell-O, however, can be prepared in advance without any compromise to their quality and taste. Therefore, according to the Ohr Zarua, these foods must be prepared before Yom Tov. The Smak agrees with the basic approach of the Ohr Zarua; the Smak, however, allows one to perform these *melachos* on Yom Tov if he utilizes a *shinui*. The Ran, on the other hand, allows one to perform all *melechtes ochel nefesh* on Yom Tov, and does not require one to prepare food beforehand, even if doing so would not compromise its quality.

### **The Halacha**

The Shulchan Aruch (495:1) follows the opinion of the Ran and permits one to cook all food on Yom Tov. The Rama (according to the understanding of the Biur Halacha 495:1) takes into account both the opinion of the Ohr Zarua and the Smak. He therefore states that one should initially prepare, before Yom Tov, any foods that are not adversely affected if they are prepared in advance. This is based on the Ohr Zarua, who prohibits performing *melacha* in this case, *even* with a *shinui*. However, if one did not prepare the food before Yom Tov and the food is needed for the Yom Tov meal he may then rely on the opinion of the Smak and perform the *melacha* while utilizing a *shinui*. The Mishnah Berurah (495:8) follows the opinion of the Rama; however, he allows one to initially postpone his food preparation to be done on Yom Tov, with a *shinui*, in the event that he does not have time to perform the preparation before Yom Tov.

Nonetheless, even according to the opinion of the Rama, the food preparations that are forbidden on Yom Tov (i.e. those that could have been performed beforehand without compromising the quality of the food) are only forbidden in a case where it was possible for the individual to perform the *melacha* before Yom Tov. If, for exam-

ple, a guest arrives on Yom Tov or the food that he already prepared is ruined on Yom Tov, he may prepare new food, even the types of food that should normally be prepared in advance. The inability to foresee the need for the food renders the food preparation a *melacha* that could not have been performed before Yom Tov. Moreover, according to the *Mishnah Berurah*, if one did not have time or if one forgot to perform a *melacha* before Yom Tov, it is also considered a *melacha* that cannot have been performed before Yom Tov, and is permitted. However, the Shulchan Aruch Harav only permits one to perform the *melacha* if it was actually impossible to perform it before Yom Tov. According to his opinion, the lack of time or the fact that one forgot does not permit one to perform it on Yom Tov. Nevertheless, according to both opinions, performing the *melacha* with a *shinui* is permitted.

### **Cooking for After Yom Tov**

One is only permitted to perform a *melacha* on Yom Tov if the *melacha* fulfills a Yom Tov need. If one only benefits from the *melacha* after Yom Tov, it is forbidden, *mid'oraisa*, to perform the *melacha*. For example, if one has food for the Yom Tov meal he may not cook food to eat after Yom Tov. Similarly, because the second day of Yom Tov is sanctified only *mid'rabbanan*; it is therefore forbidden to do *melacha* on the first day of Yom Tov for the sake of benefitting the second day. Accordingly, one may not begin preparation for the evening meal of the second day of Yom Tov until after *tzeis hakochavim* – the appearance of three stars, which marks the *halachic* beginning of the next day.

### **Ribui Bi'shiurim**

The Gemara in *Beitza* (17a) states that a woman may fill an entire pot with water on Yom Tov and place it upon the flame even if she only needs one cup. In this case, it is permitted even though there is no Yom Tov benefit being derived from the additional water. The Bais Yosef (*O'Ch* 331b) explains that the act of cooking water for Yom Tov is a permitted act; adding water to the pot is merely performing the permitted act on a larger scale and is therefore permitted. This concept is termed *ribui b'shiurim* – adding quantities. In such a case, one must add the water to the pot before placing it on the flame. Also, *ribui b'shiurim* is only permitted when adding the additional amount does not involve more work. For example, one may not bread extra pieces of chicken for after Yom Tov and bake them in a pan together with his Yom Tov food. Breading the extra pieces of chicken requires extra effort and is therefore forbidden. The *Mishnah Berurah* also states that one may not verbalize his intention of using the additional food after Yom Tov (*M.B.* 505:15). ). If the pot is already on the stove, adding more food is considered a separate act of cooking and is therefore forbidden. If one's intention is to improve the taste of the Yom Tov dish, e.g. one adds meat to a stew to improve its taste, it is permitted. (Biur Halacha 503:1 based on M.A. 507:13)

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