

Tzama Nafshi in English - Parshas Yisro תשע"ה

Transcribed and translated from previous recordings of

HaRav Eliezer Berland Shlit"a

"And Israel encamped there opposite the mountain." (19:2)

Why is "encamped" written here in the Hebrew singular form? Rashi explains: "As one person with one heart" – i.e. they went together, united as one. In Parshas Beshalach, when referring to the Egyptians it says, "And Egypt followed them in pursuit" (using the singular form), Rashi says a similar explanation, only in reversed order: "With one heart as one person." Why is it that when referring to the the Egyptians, Rashi chooses to state first the heart and then the body, whereas in the case of *Am Yisrael* (the Jewish People), he chose to state first the body and only then the heart? Is this to say that we are so connected to our bodies? Are the people of Israel tied to materialism? Are the other Nations people of heart and spirit? On the contrary! We are a nation of 'heart' and *they* are nations of the 'body'! The book, "*Ma'ayanah Shel Torah - The Well of the Torah*," answers this perplexity and explains that the meaning of "one heart" in the verse regarding the Egyptians, refers to their 'special' desire, the desire that unites together all of the nations of the world, which is the desire to kill and annihilate *Am Yisrael*. That is the one thing that unites them! That is the meaning of "one heart". It doesn't mean they have a heart; they have no heart at all! They are completely heartless! However, they share a desire - one desire, one purpose. There are no disputes or differences of opinions when it comes to this mutual purpose. They all look forward to the return of "Auschwitz". All of the nations are just waiting to see who will succeed in killing off the Jewish people. That is the "one heart" of all of the nations of the world, without any exceptions whatsoever. With regards to *Am Yisrael*, the meaning is entirely different. *Am Yisrael* are one! They are one body! All of the Jews are one person! That is the reality! We are all one! *Am Yisrael* is one person containing 248 limbs and

365 sinews! Every person is a part of that one body, a limb; one person can be part of the head, while another is part of the arm, one is part of the foot while another can be a finger, a vein or the skin, etc. They are all a part of that one body.

Am Yisrael is the living meaning of "unity". The Jews are one body, one soul! No person in the world would willingly part with any limb of his body, not a finger nor even the nail of his pinkie! Nothing at all! If a person were to approach another and ask, "How bad would it be if we cut off part of your finger? It wouldn't be so terrible to lose just a third of your finger, would it? What do you need it for, anyway?" The reply would unquestionably be, "No way! I'm not prepared for you to cut off even a speck of my finger!" The same applies to *Am Yisrael*; no Jew is dispensable. We must all love every single Jew with all our heart and all our soul.

The Rebbe of Vorkin comments on the verse, "And Israel encamped there" and explains that the Jews that came out of Egypt had an immense love for each other. They recognized the beauty and grace in each other (translators comment: grace in Hebrew is "*chen*" and in the literature the Torah says, "*Vayachon*" which means "And they encamped", however the root of "*vayachon*" is also "*chen*" – i.e. grace), and conceded to one another. They saw and acknowledged the uniqueness in each other - their virtue, their greatness and righteousness. Each person felt that the holiness and righteousness of every other Jew had by far exceeded his own; that is the meaning of "And Israel encamped there."

"As one man!" Every Jew cared deeply for the other and truly wanted the others to be happy and successful! They wanted only the best for each other! **The love and special feelings they**

had towards each other was what enabled them to receive the Holy Torah.

Our purpose in this world is to observe the commandment of "Ahavas Yisrael; to love each other and be united as one! We must nullify ourselves to that reality! Every person must feel the suffering of his brethren and try to sense what is causing them pain. We must make sure not to do anything that can hurt people or cause them any type of grief. We should love every Jew with all our hearts and all our souls and never speak against anyone! Even if a Jew is causing you the most terrible suffering and troubles and even if he beats you, you must not fail [in your responsibility to love him]! Don't respond! Don't say one word! *Am Yisrael* is one body; they are one person! If you accidentally hurt yourself, G-d forbid, would you then hate the limb of your body that wounded the other limb? Of course not! You must realize that the Jew (who hurt you) is the diamond in the crown of Hashem Yisborach! After all, that Jew dons Tefillin every morning, keeps Shabbos, learns Torah and wakes up to learn at *chatzos* (midnight). **You should know that the purpose of the slander that he speaks about you is to sweeten the Heavenly judgment against you! It atones for all of your sins! It moulds you into a vessel with which to receive the Torah.**

When a person lacks love for his fellow Jews, he cannot grow to any higher spiritual levels. The Torah itself spiritually burns the person because the only vessel with which one can accept the Torah is "*ahavas chinam*" – unconditional love. You must understand that the first priority of a person who is truly connected to the way of Rebbe Nachman of Breslov is that he has love of his fellow Jew, only once he loves every Jew with his heart and soul can he merit understanding the Rebbe! He will merit drawing the greatness and the essence of the Rebbe's teachings down into this world.

People have plenty of strength to go out and work for 24 hours a day in order to sustain their family and that just proves that they have enough strength to give their very lives for the sake of another Jew. A person becomes an existing reality only in as much as he is absorbed in the Jewish

people as a collective! The expression "I" doesn't exist at all! I am only a reality if I am able to nullify myself for the sake of another, everyone is a single existence, one soul, there is no such a thing as "alone". There is no "one". If a person becomes "one", he has cut himself off from the rest, in which case, he is nullified; it's as though he doesn't exist at all! When does a person become "me"? Only when he is capable of sacrificing his own life for the sake of others, for the only reality is that of the Jewish people collectively and of Hashem Yisborach. There are no individuals! Anything that is individual is nullified and non-existent; it is just a figment of imagination. **The essence of the Torah and the mitzvos and the essence of a Jew is giving; giving to other people, giving to everyone! When a person separates himself from the *klal* (the Jewish people collectively) and is only concerned with himself, he becomes a non-reality.** He has wiped himself off the face of the planet! A person becomes existent, he becomes a reality only according to the way he includes himself within the *klal* and within Hashem. The only reality is to be included within the *klal* and Hashem. That is the only reality! Every person must know that whenever he thinks only about himself and has no concern for others, he is simply non-existent! Contrarily, when he forgets about his own needs in his concern about others, he loves everyone and doesn't speak against any other Jew and only thinks about the *klal* and about Hashem - then he exists!

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