



BAMIDBAR

Is It Worth Teaching Them So Young?

When Early Education Feels Pointless, but It Might Be Everything

PARSHAH OVERVIEW

Bamidbar

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In the Sinai Desert, G-d says to conduct a census of the twelve tribes of Israel. Moses counts 603,550 men of draftable age (twenty to sixty years); the tribe of Levi, numbering 22,300 males age one month and older, is counted separately. The Levites are to serve in the Sanctuary, replacing the firstborn, whose number they approximated, and who were disqualified when they participated in the worshipping of the Golden Calf. The 273 firstborn who lack a Levite to replace them have to pay a five-shekel "ransom" to redeem themselves.

Each time the people break camp, the three Levite clans dismantle and transport the Sanctuary and then reassemble it at the center of the next encampment. They then erect their own tents around it: The Kehat family, who carries the Sanctuary's vessels—the ark, the *menorah*, etc., in their specially designed coverings—on their shoulders, camp to its south; the Gershonites, in charge of its tapestries and roof coverings, to its west; and the families of Merari, who transport its wall panels and pillars, to its north. Before the Sanctuary's entranceway, to its east, are the tents of Moses, Aaron, and Aaron's sons.

Beyond the Levite circle, the twelve tribes camp in four groups of three tribes each. To the east are Judah (pop. 74,600), Issachar (54,400), and Zebulun (57,400); to the south, Reuben (46,500), Simeon (59,300), and Gad (45,650); to the west, Ephraim (40,500), Manasseh (32,200), and Benjamin (35,400); and to the north, Dan (62,700), Asher (41,500), and Naphtali (53,400). This formation is kept also while traveling, each tribe with its own *nasi* (prince or leader) and its own flag with its tribal color and emblem.

QUESTION FOR DISCUSSION

At what age should we begin investing serious effort into a child's education? How much should we really expect them to absorb in the early years, and is it worth the time and money? Are we over-parenting when we push too much too soon, or is it necessary to start as early as possible to build a solid foundation?

TEXT 1A

Numbers 1:1-3

א. וַיְדַבֵּר ה' אֶל מֹשֶׁה בְּמִדְבַר סִינַי בְּאֵהָל מוֹעֵד בְּאֶחָד לַחֹדֶשׁ הַשְּׁנִי בַשָּׁנָה הַשְּׁנִית לְצֵאתָם מֵאֶרֶץ מִצְרַיִם לֵאמֹר.

ב. שָׂאוּ אֶת רֹאשׁ כָּל עֵדַת בְּנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל לְמִשְׁפְּחֹתָם לְבֵית אֲבוֹתָם, בְּמִסְפַּר שְׁמוֹת כָּל זָכָר לְגִלְגֻלָּתָם.

ג. מִבֶּן עֶשְׂרִים שָׁנָה וְיָמָעְלָה כָּל יֵצֵא צָבָא בְּיִשְׂרָאֵל, תִּפְקְדוּ אֹתָם לְצִבְאוֹתָם אִתְּהָ וְאֶהְרֹן.

1. G-d spoke to Moses in the Sinai Desert, in the Tent of Meeting, on the first day of the second month, in the second year after the Exodus from the land of Egypt, saying,
2. "Take the sum of all the congregation of the Children of Israel, by families following their fathers' houses; a head count of every male according to the number of their names.
3. "From twenty years old and upward—all who are fit to go out to the army in Israel; you shall count them by their legions, you and Aaron."

G-d told moses to
count the jewish men
from ages 20–60.



TEXT 1B

Rashi, Numbers 1:1

"וַיְדַבֵּר. בְּמִדְבַּר סִינַי בְּאֶחָד לַחֹדֶשׁ". מִתּוֹךְ חֲבָתוֹ לְפָנָיו, מוֹנֶה אוֹתָם כָּל שָׁעָה. כְּשִׁיצְאוּ מִמִּצְרַיִם, מִנְּאֻן (שְׁמוֹת יב, לז); וְכִשְׁנִפְּלוּ בְּעֵגְלָה, מִנְּאֻן לַיָּדַע מִנֵּי־הַנוֹתָרִים (שְׁמוֹת לב, לה); כְּשִׁבָּא לְהַשְׁרוֹת שְׂכִינְתוֹ עֲלֵיהֶם, מִנְּאֻם. בְּאֶחָד בְּנִיסָן הוּקַם הַמִּשְׁכָּן, וּבְאֶחָד בְּאֵיָר מִנְּאֻם.

"G-d spoke . . . in the Sinai Desert . . . on the first" of the month: Because they were dear to Him, He counted them often. When they left Egypt, He counted them (Exodus 12:37); when many fell because of the Sin of the Golden Calf, He counted them to know the number of the survivors (Exodus 32:28); when He came to cause His Divine Presence to rest among them, He counted them. On the first of Nisan, the Tabernacle was erected, and on the first of Iyar, He counted them.



G-d counted them
often because they
were dear to Him.

The tribe of Levi was counted differently: all males starting at one month and up.



TEXT 2A

Numbers 3:14-16

יד. וַיְדַבֵּר ה' אֶל מֹשֶׁה בְּמִדְבַּר סִינַי לֵאמֹר.

טו. פְּקֹד אֶת בְּנֵי לֵוִי לְבֵית אֲבֹתָם לְמִשְׁפְּחֹתָם כָּל זָכָר מִיָּמֶן חֹדֶשׁ
וּמַעֲלָה תִּפְקְדֵם.

טז. וַיִּפְקֹד אֹתָם מֹשֶׁה עַל פִּי ה' כַּאֲשֶׁר צִוָּה.

14. G-d spoke to Moses in the Sinai Desert, saying:

15. "Count the Children of Levi according to their fathers' house according to their families. Count all males from the age of one month and upward.

16. "So Moses counted them according to G-d's word, just as he was commanded."

TEXT 2B

Rashi, Numbers 3:16

"על פי ה'". אָמַר מֹשֶׁה לְפָנָי הַקְּדוֹשׁ בְּרוּךְ הוּא: הֲיֵאָדָּה אֲנִי נִכְנָס לְתוֹךְ אֹהֲלֵיהֶם לְדַעַת מִנֵּן יוֹנְקֵיהֶם?

אָמַר לוֹ הַקְּדוֹשׁ בְּרוּךְ הוּא: עֲשֵׂה אִתָּהּ שְׁלָךְ, וְאֲנִי אַעֲשֶׂה שְׁלִי.

הָלַךְ מֹשֶׁה וְעָמַד עַל פֶּתַח הָאֹהֶל, וְהִשְׁכִּינָה מְקַדְמָת לְפָנָיו, וּבֵת קוֹל יוֹצֵאת מִן הָאֹהֶל וְאוֹמְרָת: כֹּךְ וְכֹךְ תִּינּוֹקוֹת יֵשׁ בְּאֹהֶל זֶה. לְכֹךְ נֶאֱמַר "עַל פִּי ה'" (שָׁם).

"According to G-d's word": Moses said to G-d, "How can I enter their tents to know the number of their babies?"

G-d replied to him, "You do yours, and I will do Mine."

Moses went and stood at the entrance to the tent, and the Divine Presence preceded him. A Heavenly voice then emanated from the tent, saying, "There are this many babies in this tent." That is why it says, "according to G-d's word."



Moses counted the babies in a miraculous way, with G-d's help.

TEXT 3A

Numbers 1:48-49

מח. וַיְדַבֵּר ה' אֶל מֹשֶׁה לֵאמֹר.

מט. אַךְ אֶת מַטֵּה לְוִי לֹא תִפְקֹד וְאֶת רֵאשִׁים לֹא
תִשָּׂא בְּתוֹךְ בְּנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל.

48. G-d spoke to Moses, saying:

49. "Only the tribe of Levi you shall not number, and you shall not reckon their sum among the Children of Israel."

QUESTION

Were the *Leviim*
counted or not?

TEXT 3B

Rashi, ad loc.

"אַךְ אֶת מַטֵּה לְוִי לֹא תִפְקֹד". כִּדְאִי הוּא
לְגִיוֹן שֶׁל מֶלֶךְ לְהִיּוֹת נִמְנָה לְבַדּוֹ.

The king's special legion deserves their own count.

ANSWER

The *Leviim* were counted, but separate from the nation since they are the king's special force.

TEXT 4

Numbers 1:50-53

נ. וְאַתָּה הַפְקֵד אֶת הַלְוִיִּם עַל
מִשְׁכַּן הָעֵדוּת וְעַל כָּל כֵּלָיו וְעַל
כָּל אֲשֶׁר לוֹ, הִמָּה יִשְׂאוּ אֶת
הַמִּשְׁכָּן וְאֶת כָּל כֵּלָיו וְהֵם
יִשְׁרְתוּהוּ, וְסָבִיב לַמִּשְׁכָּן יִחַנּוּ.

נא. וּבְנֹסַע הַמִּשְׁכָּן יוֹרִידוּ אֹתוֹ
הַלְוִיִּם וּבְחֻנַּת הַמִּשְׁכָּן יִקִּימוּ אֹתוֹ
הַלְוִיִּם, וְהִזָּר הַקָּרֵב יוּמָת.

נב. וְחָנוּ בְּנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל אִישׁ עַל
מִחֲנֵהוּ וְאִישׁ עַל דְּגְלוֹ לְצַבָּאתָם.

נג. וְהַלְוִיִּם יִחַנּוּ סָבִיב לַמִּשְׁכָּן
הָעֵדוּת, וְלֹא יִהְיֶה קֶצֶף עַל עֵדוּת
בְּנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל, וְשָׁמְרוּ הַלְוִיִּם אֶת
מִשְׁמֶרֶת מִשְׁכַּן הָעֵדוּת.

50. But you shall appoint the Levites over the Tabernacle of the testimony, over all its vessels and over all that belong to it: they shall carry the Tabernacle and they shall minister to it, and they shall encamp around the Tabernacle.

51. When the Tabernacle is set to travel, the Levites shall dismantle it; and when the Tabernacle camps, the Levites shall erect it. Any outsider [non-Levite] who approaches shall be put to death.

52. The Children of Israel shall encamp, each person by their own camp and each person by their division.

53. The Levites shall encamp around the Mishkan of the testimony, so that there will be no wrath upon the congregation of the Children of Israel, and the Levites shall guard the watch of the Tabernacle of the testimony.



We see the *Leviim* are the king's special legion because all their jobs involve serving in the Temple.

QUESTION

Why, then, begin counting from one month old if such youngsters certainly couldn't serve in the BeiT Hamikdash?

TEXT 5

Rashi, Numbers 3:15

"מִבֶּן חֹדֶשׁ וָמַעְלָה". מִשִּׁיֵּצֵא מִכֻּלֵּי נִפְלִיִּים
הוּא נִמְנָה לְקִרְאָה שׁוֹמְרֵי מִשְׁמֶרֶת הַקֹּדֶשׁ.

"From the age of one month and upward." When the baby is no longer in the category of [possible] premature birth, he is counted among those called, "keepers of the holy charge."

שׁוֹמֵר מִשְׁמֶרֶת הַקֹּדֶשׁ

Shomer mishmeret hakodesh

Keepers of the holy charge

This phrase shows the *Leviim's* task was spiritual, guarding the Mishkan's holiness.

TEXT 6

Maimonides,
Mishneh Torah, Laws
of the Temple 8:1

נְשִׁמֵּרֶת הַמִּקְדָּשׁ מִצְּנוֹת עֲשֵׂהָ. וְאַף עַל פִּי שֶׁאֵין נֶשֶׁם פֶּחַד
מֵאוֹיְבִים וְלֹא מִלְּסֻטִּים שֶׁאֵין שְׂמִירָתוֹ אֶלָּא כְּבוֹד לּוֹ,
אֵינוֹ דוֹמֶה פְּלִטְרִין שֶׁיֵּשׁ עָלָיו שׂוֹמְרִין לְפִלְטְרִין שֶׁאֵין
עָלָיו שׂוֹמְרִין.

It's a positive *mitzvah* to guard the Temple. This *mitzvah* applies even though there is no fear of enemies or thieves, for guarding the Temple is an expression of respect. A palace with guards is much more impressive than a palace without guards.

The *Leviim* camped around the Mishkan to express its holiness and show it deserved respect and honor.



TEXT 7

The Rebbe, Rabbi
Menachem Mendel
Schneerson, *Sichot
Kodesh* 5740:3, pp.
154-155

וואס דער חֲנֻיָּה פון די לױם "סְבִיב
לְמִשְׁכָּן" איז געווען בא די קטנים ("מִבֶּן
חֹדֶשׁ" און נאך אינגער) פונקט אזוי ווי
בא די גדולים.

ואדרבה: די קטנים זיינען געווען בעיקר
די וואס זיינען געווען "יְחִנּוּ סְבִיב
לְמִשְׁכָּן", ווארום די גדולים, די זכרים,
זיינען געגאנגען עובד זיין עבודתם
במשכן, זיינען זיי דאך גיט געווען אין
די אוהלים "סְבִיב לְמִשְׁכָּן" ועל דרך זה
די נקבות זיינען דאך געגאנגען
איינקויפן בא די אומות העולם די זאכן
וואס מ'האט געדארפט האבן אין לְשׂוֹבָב,
במילא זיינען זיי אויך גיט געווען די
גאנצע צייט אין די אוהלים "סְבִיב
לְמִשְׁכָּן".

The role of the Levites in “encamping around the Mishkan” applied to the little ones—those “from one month” old and even younger—just as it did to the adults.

In fact, the children were primarily those who “encamped around the Mishkan.” The adults, the men, were busy with their duties in the Mishkan, so they weren’t in the tents “around the Mishkan” all the time. Similarly, the women went out to purchase what was needed for the home from the surrounding nations, meaning they too weren’t always in the tents “around the Mishkan.”



TEXT 7

The Rebbe, Rabbi
Menachem Mendel
Schneerson, *Sichot
Kodesh* 5740:3, pp.
154-155

די איינציקע וואס האבן זיך געפונען
אין די אוהל'ים די "סביב למשכן" זיינען
געווען די גאר קליינע קינדער וואס
זיינען נאך בעריסו, ווארום זיי האבן
ערגעץ ניט געקענט גיין.

קומט דאך אויס דאס וואס שטייט
"והלויים יחנו סביב למשכן גו' ושמו
הלויים את משמרת משכן העדות" גייט
בעיקר אויף די קטנים.

וואס דערפאר ווערן אויך, ואדרבה —
דוקא די לויים "מבן חודש ומעלה"
אנגערופן "שומר משמרת הקודש".

The only ones who were actually found in those tents were the very young children who were still nursing, since they couldn't go anywhere.

So it turns out that the verse, "The Levites shall encamp around the Mishkan . . . [and they] shall guard the watch of the Tabernacle of the testimony" is mainly referring to the children.

And this is why it's specifically the Levites "from . . . one month and upward" who are called the "keepers of the holy charge."

ANSWER

The children, even just a day old, may be more qualified than adults, since adults aren't always present, but the babies' constant presence around the Mishkan actively brings honor.

TEXT 8A

The Rebbe, Rabbi
Menachem Mendel
Schneerson,
Likutei Sichot 23, p.
256

כָּאֵן הַמָּקוֹם צוֹ מְעוֹרָר זַיִן נְאֻכְאֻמָּאֵל אוֹיף צוֹ מוֹסִיף זַיִן אֵינן דִּי פְּעוּלוֹת מֵיט אִידִישְׁעֵר קִינְדֵּער
אוֹיף צוֹגְרִיטֵן צוֹ קְבֵלַת הַתּוֹרָה . . . בְּחֵג הַשְּׁבֻעוֹת גּוֹפֵא, בְּעֵת קְרִיאַת עֲשֻׁרַת הַדְּבָרוֹת (וְוֹאס
אִיז בְּדוּגְמַת יוֹם מִפֶּן תּוֹרָה) זְאֵלן זַיִן אֵלֶע אִידִישְׁעֵר קִינְדֵּער בְּבֵית הַכְּנֶסֶת און הֶעֱרֵן דִּי עֲשֻׁרַת
הַדְּבָרוֹת . . .

דָּאס מֵינִיט מְעַן אוֹיף גָּאָר קְלִינֶע קִינְדֵּער, און ווי עֵס שְׁטֵיט אֵינן הֵינְטִיקֶער סְדֵרָה בְּנוֹגֶע צוֹ
שְׁבֵט לוי, אַז אַפִּילוֹ אַ גָּאָר קְלִינֵן קִינְד "מִכֶּן חוֹדֵשׁ נְמַעְלָה" אִיז עֵר שׁוֹמֵר מְשֻׁמֶרֶת הַקּוֹדֵשׁ.

Here's where we should emphasize once again the importance of involving Jewish children in preparing for the receiving of the Torah. . . . On Shavuot, during the reading of the Ten Commandments—which is like receiving the Torah at Sinai—all Jewish children should be in the synagogue, listening to the Ten Commandments. . . .

This includes even very small children, and as we see in our *parshah* regarding the tribe of Levi, even a very young child "from one month and upward" is considered a "keeper of the holy charge."

This shows the importance of involving the young children.

As Shavuot approaches all children should hear the “Ten commandments”.



QUESTION

If counting babies applied only to the *Leviim*, how can we get all the Jews to bring their children to *shul* on Shavuot?

TEXT 8B

The Rebbe, Rabbi
Menachem Mendel
Schneerson, *ibid.*, pp.
256-257

וְאֵף עַל פִּי אֵז דָּאס נְשְׁטֵיט דָּאָךְ בְּנוֹגַע צו בְּנֵי לֵוִי — אִיז יְדוּעֵ אַז בְּזִמַּן הַגָּלוּת . . . אַז אַלֶּע אִידֵן בְּדוּגְמַת
כְּהֻנִּים וּלְוִיִּים . . .

דְּעֶרְפוֹן אִיז מוֹכֵן אַז כְּשֵׁם ווִי בְּנוֹגַע צו שְׁמִירַת הַמִּשְׁכָּן (כְּפִשׁוּט) דוֹרְךְ בְּנֵי לֵוִי (כְּפִשְׁטוֹת), אִיז אָפִילוּ אַ גָּאָר
קְלִיִּין קִינְד, "מִכֵּן חוֹדֶשׁ וְנִמְעָלָה", און נָאָךְ פְּרִיעֶר — גְּלִיִּיךְ ווִי עֶר אִיז גַּעבֶאָרן גְּעוֹוֹאָרן — אַ "שׁוֹמֵר מִשְׁמֶרֶת
הַקּוֹדֶשׁ". עַל דְּרָךְ זֶה בְּנוֹגַע צו תּוֹרָה, אַז יַעֲדֶעֱר אִיד, גְּלִיִּיךְ ווִי עֶר וְוֵעֲרֵט גַּעבֶאָרן גְּעוֹוֹאָרן, אִיז עֶר שׁוֹמֵר
מִשְׁמֶרֶת הַקּוֹדֶשׁ. . .

און דְּעֶרִיבֶעֱר דָּאָרְף מָעַן זִיךְ מִשְׁתַּדֵּל זַיִן אַז אַלֶּע אִידיִשְׁע קִינְדֶּעֱר "מִכֵּן חוֹדֶשׁ וְנִמְעָלָה" און נָאָךְ פְּרִיעֶר, זָאָלן
הָעֶרן דִּי עֲשֶׂרֶת הַדְּבָרוֹת.

Even though this is written regarding the tribe of Levi, it's well known that during the Exile, all Jews are like the *Kohanim* and *Leviim*.

This means that when it comes to the protection of the Mishkan, even a very young child—"from one month and upward"—is regarded as a "guardian of the holy watch" as soon as they're born. The same applies to Torah: every Jew, from birth, is a "guardian of the holy watch."

Therefore, we must make an effort to ensure that all Jewish children, "from one month and upward," and even younger, hear the Ten Commandments.

ANSWER

In Exile, we are like the *Leviim*. Just as even a one-month-old child is a guardian of the holy Mishkan, so too children can be guardians of the holy Torah.



Education begins from the earliest age, even before the child is able to fully understand.

TEXT 9A

Mishnah, Avot 2:9

חַמְשָׁה תַלְמִידִים הָיוּ לוֹ לְרַבֵּן יוֹחָנָן בֶּן זַכַּאי, וְאֵלוּ הֵיוּ: רַבִּי אֶלְיעֶזֶר
בֶּן הֶרְקֵנוֹס, וְרַבִּי יְהוֹשֻׁעַ בֶּן חַנְּנִיָּה, וְרַבִּי יוֹסֵי הַכֹּהֵן, וְרַבִּי שְׁמַעוֹן בֶּן
נְתַנְאֵל, וְרַבִּי אֶלְעָזָר בֶּן עֲרָךְ.

הוּא הָיָה מוֹנֶה שְׁבַתָּן: . . . רַבִּי יְהוֹשֻׁעַ בֶּן חַנְּנִיָּה, אֲשֶׁרִי יוֹלְדָתוֹ.

Rabban Yochanan ben Zakai had five disciples: Rabbi Eliezer ben Hurkenos, Rabbi Yehoshua ben Chananyah, Rabbi Yosei the *Kohen*, Rabbi Shimon ben Netanel, and Rabbi Elazar ben Arach.

He would recount their praises: . . . “Yehoshua ben Chananyah—fortunate is she who gave birth to him.”

TEXT 9B

Rabbi Ovadiah of
Bartenura, ad loc.

עַל שֵׁם שֶׁהִיא גְרָמָה לוֹ שִׂיְהֵא חָכָם, שֶׁהִיְתָה מְחַזְרֶת עַל כָּל
בְּתֵי מִדְרָשׁוֹת שְׁבַעֲיָרָה וְאוֹמְרֶת לָהֶם בְּבִקְשָׁה מִכֶּם בְּקִשׁוֹ
רַחֲמִים עַל הָעוֹבֵר הַזֶּה שְׁבִמְעֵי שִׂיְהִיָּה חָכָם, וּמִיּוֹם שֶׁנּוֹלַד
לֹא הוּצִיָּאָה עַרְשָׁתוֹ מִבֵּית הַמְדָרָשׁ כְּדֵי שֶׁלֹּא יִכָּנְסוּ בְּאַזְנוֹ
אֶלָּא דְבַרֵי תוֹרָה.

She is called so because she caused him to become wise. She would go around all the synagogues in the city and ask them, "Please, pray for this child in my womb that he should be wise." From the day he was born, she never took him out of the study hall, so that nothing but words of Torah would enter his ears.

אַשְׁרֵי יוֹלְדָתּוֹ

Ashrei yoladto

Fortunate is she who gave birth to him.

Education can begin even while the child is still in the womb.

Even from day one, the education we give them has a deep impact.



TEXT 10

Rabbi Yosef Yitzchak Schneersohn, *Likutei Diburim*, vol. 1, pp. 50-51

וועלן מיר דאס פארשטיין אין א מַשַׁל גַּשְׁמִי,
נְגִינָה אִיז א חֲכָמָה גְּדוּלָה, און אין דעם נְשִׁימוּשׁ
פון כְּלֵי זָמֵר אין דאָך פֶּאַראַן טִיפֶּע חֲכָמוֹת
בְּאַפְּנֵי הוֹצָאוֹת הַקּוֹל וְהַתְּגִלוֹתוֹ - הן כָּל קוֹל
וְקוֹל לְעֶצְמוֹ, וְהוּן בְּשִׂיתוּף וְהִרְכָּבוֹת כַּמָּה
קוֹלוֹת מְכֻלֵי זָמֵר אַחַר, וּבְפֶרֶט בְּהִרְכָּבַת נְגִינָה
הַיּוֹצֵאת מִכַּמָּה כְּלֵי זָמֵר יַחַד אֲשֶׁר כּוֹלֵם
צָרִיכִים לְהִיּוֹת מִתְּאַיְמוֹת לְפִי חוּקֵי חֲכָמַת
הַנְּגִינָה.

וְהִנֵּה יֵשׁ אֵלּוּ שְׂהֵם חֲכָמִים גְּדוּלִים בְּחֲכָמָה זו,
וְהוּא יוֹדֵעַ כְּאַשֶׁר יַגַּע בְּאַצְבָּעוֹ בְּנִימָה זו
בְּהַכִּינּוֹר יוֹצֵא קוֹל כְּזָה, וְכַאֲשֶׁר יִכֶּה בְּאַצְבָּעוֹ
בְּתוֹף יוֹצֵא קוֹל כְּזָה. וְכֵן הוּא בְּהִרְכָּבָה כַּמָּה
כְּלֵי זָמֵר, עַד שֶׁמִּבֵּין כּוֹלֵם יַחְדָּיו יוֹצֵא נִיגוֹן
מְתוּק מְעוֹרָר וּמְעַנֵּג אֶת הַנְּפֶשׁ.

To understand this concept, let's use a simple example. Music is a great wisdom and, within the use of musical instruments, there are deep principles regarding how sound is produced and revealed. Each sound, when played alone, has its own character, and when combined with other instruments, it creates harmonies. This is especially true when music is created by multiple instruments playing together, and all must be in harmony according to the rules of music.

Now, there are those who are experts in this wisdom. They know exactly which note to play on the violin to produce a certain sound or how to strike the drum to create a specific tone. They understand how to combine different instruments to create a sweet and harmonious melody that stirs and delights the soul.

TEXT 10

Rabbi Yosef Yitzchak Schneersohn, *Likutei Diburim*, vol. 1, pp. 50-51

אַמָּנָם מִי שְׂאִינוּ חָכָם בְּחֻכְמַת הַנְּגִינָה, הָרִי גַם
מְנַגֵּיעָתוֹ בְּנִימָה שֶׁל כִּינּוֹר, אוֹ מֵהַכָּאָתוֹ בְּתוֹף
גַּם כֵּן יוֹצֵא קוֹל, וְהַקּוֹל הַיּוֹצֵא הוּא גַם כֵּן כְּפִי
חֻקֵי הַנְּגִינָה, רַק שְׂמוֹצֵיא הַקּוֹל אֵינוֹ יוֹדֵעַ
מִזֶּה, עֶר וְיִיס גֵּיט פּוֹן דָּעֵם.

וְהַנְּמַשֵּׁל מִזֶּה יוֹבֵן לְפָל, דְּהַנְּה . . . וְוַאס דָּאס
אִיז תַּחֲתָיִים שְׁנַיִם שְׁלִישִׁים רְבִיעִים
וְחֲמִישִׁים, וְוַאס עֵס אִיז כּוֹלֵל כָּל הַד' עוֹלָמֹת
אַצִּילוֹת בְּרִיאָה יְצִירָה עֲשִׂיָה, אוֹן עוֹלָמוֹת
הָאִין סוּף שְׁלֹמְעֵלָה מִן אַצִּילוֹת, וְוַאס דָּאס אִיז
אַלְץ פֶּאָרַאן אִין פְּחוֹת הַנְּפֶשׁ . . . אַז תַּחֲתָיִים
הָאט אַ פֶּאָרְבוּנְד מִיט חֲמִישִׁים.

However, someone who is not knowledgeable about music can still produce sound by playing the violin or striking the drum. The sound that emerges is still in accordance with the principles of music, even though the person doesn't understand how or why it sounds the way it does. They simply don't know the underlying wisdom behind it.

The same idea applies here. The “layers”—the second, third, fourth, and fifth—are like the different realms of existence: the worlds of *Atzilut*, *Beri'ah*, *Yetzirah*, and *Asiyah*, as well as the infinite worlds above *Atzilut*. These all exist within the faculties of the soul. When a person is called to the Torah and says, “Blessed is the L-rd, the Blessed One,” even if they don't understand the deep intentions behind the words, they are still saying this prayer across all realms.

TEXT 10

Rabbi Yosef Yitzchak Schneersohn, *Likutei Diburim*, vol. 1, pp. 50-51

איז אז א איד איז עולה לתורה דא אין תחתיים, און זאגט "בָּרְכוּ אֶת ה' הַמְּבֹרָךְ", איז הגם ער ווייס גיט וואס צוא מכוון זיין, זאגט זיך "בָּרְכוּ אֶת ה' הַמְּבֹרָךְ" אין אלע די עולמות אצילות בריאה יצירה עשיה. אט כשם ויא דער נפש זאגט אין עשיה, אט אזוי זאגען רוח ונשמה וחייה אין די עולמות יצירה בריאה אצילות, און דאס אלץ דערהערט זעך אין יחידה [שבנפש] כמו שהוא בעולמות האין סוף שלמעלה מאצילות.

ובזה יש חילוק מי שיודע כל פרטי הכוונות. וישנו כזה שיודע כללות הענין, וישנו כזה אשר גם כללות הענין אינו יודע. ומכל מקום איז דער ענין טוט זעך אפ אין אלע עולמות העליונים בדוגמת דבר המשל מיציאת הקול מהנימה הנזכר לעיל, נאר ער ווייס נעבעך פון דעם גיט.

When a person in the world of *Asiyah* says something, it is also said in the worlds of *Yetzirah*, *Beri'ah*, and *Atzilut*, and all of this is heard in the highest realm, deep into the *Yechidah* (the essence of the soul), as it resonates in the infinite worlds above *Atzilut*.

There is a difference between someone who knows the full details of the intentions behind the prayer and someone who only knows the general idea. Even someone who doesn't know the general concept still brings the prayer into all of these higher worlds. However, they may not understand the full depth of what they are saying, but still, this spiritual action takes place.



TEXT 10

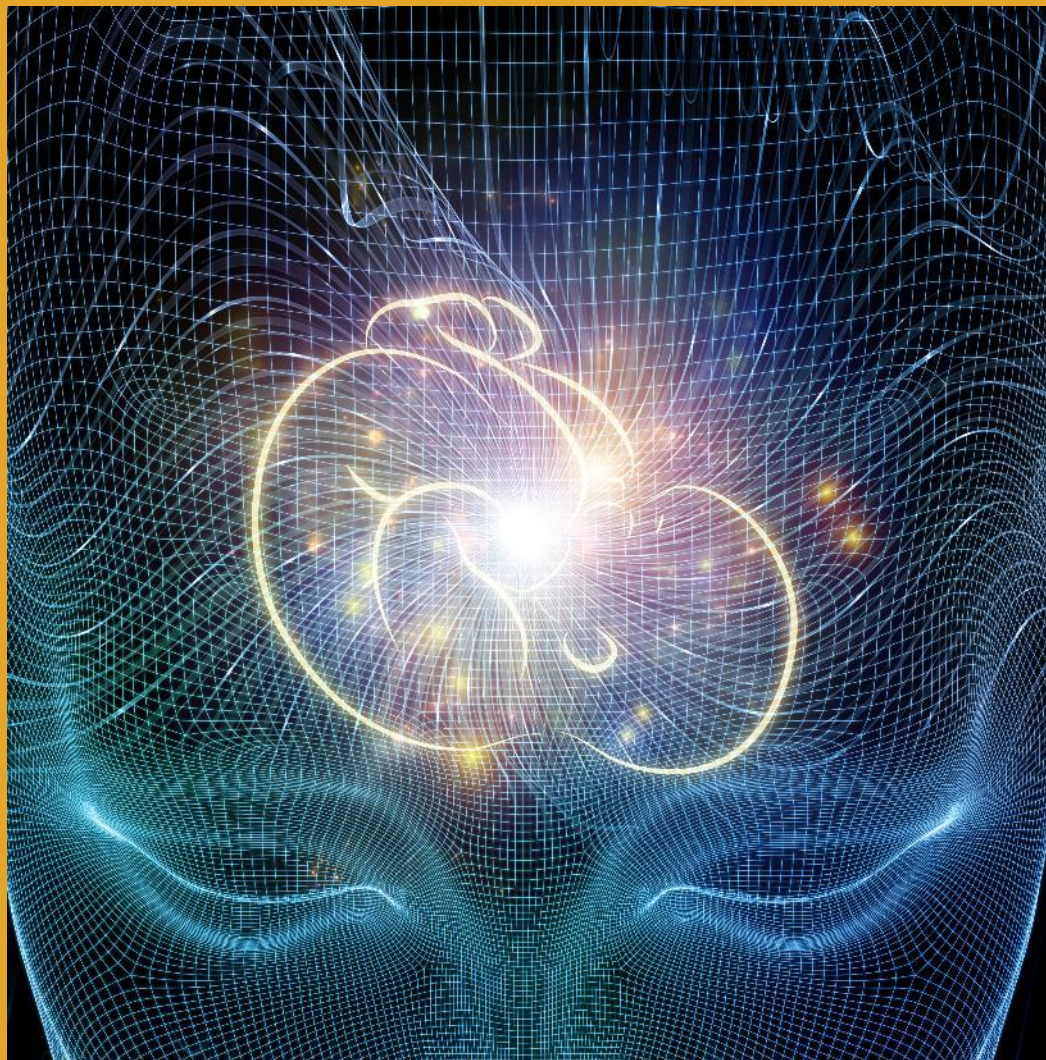
Rabbi Yosef Yitzchak
Schneersohn, *Likutei
Diburim*, vol. 1, pp.
50-51

אַבְּעַר דְּעַר נִיט ווִיסִין, וואס מִיא ווִייס נִיט,
איז נָאָר אין תְּחִתִּים. אַבְּעַר הֶעֱכֶעֱר פֿון
תְּחִתִּים ווִייס מְעַן שִׁיין, אויף דָּעם שְׁטִיט
"וְצִדְקָתוֹ עוֹמֶדֶת לְעַד", עַר הָאֵט אַ קאַפִּיטָאל
אין עוֹלָמוֹת הָעֲלִיּוֹנִים, וואס מִיט דְּעַר צִיט
וועט עַר ווִיסִין..

But this ignorance of the details only applies in the lowest world, *Asiyah*. Higher up, in the higher realms, one has a clear understanding. This is why it says, "And His righteousness stands forever" (Psalms 112:3). Everyone has a "chapter" in the higher worlds. With time, they will come to know and understand these deeper truths.

Even if a child can't understand it, their soul still absorbs the values and lessons they're exposed to.





There's a Talmudic idea that a fetus learns the entire Torah in the womb, only to forget it before birth.

TEXT 11

Talmud, Nidah 30b

דַּרְשׁ רַבִּי שִׁמְלַאי: . . . וְגַר דְּלוּק לּוֹ עַל רֵאשׁוֹ, וְצוּפָה וּמִבֵּית מִסּוּף הָעוֹלָם וְעַד סוּפוֹ . . .

וְאִין לָךְ יָמִים שְׂאָדָם שְׂרוּי בְּטוֹבָה יוֹתֵר מֵאוֹתָן הַיָּמִים . . . וּמְלַמְּדִין אוֹתוֹ כָּל הַתּוֹרָה כּוּלָּה . . .

וְכִינּוֹן שְׂפָא לְאֹוִיר הָעוֹלָם, בָּא מְלַאךְ וְסִטְרוֹ עַל פִּיו, וּמְשַׁכְּחוֹ כָּל הַתּוֹרָה כּוּלָּה.

Rabbi Simlai taught: . . . a candle is lit for the fetus above its head, and he or she gazes from one end of the world to the other. . . .

There are no days when a person is in a more blissful state than those days when they're a fetus in their mother's womb. . . . The fetus is taught the entire Torah while in the womb. . . .

Once the fetus emerges into the environment of the world, an angel comes and slaps it on its mouth, causing it to forget the entire Torah.

QUESTION

What's the point of teaching the fetus Torah if it will only forget it later?

TEXT 12

Rabbi Shneur Zalman
of Liadi, *Likutei
Torah*, Shelach 44a

וְלִהְבִּין לְמָה מְלַמְּדִין אוֹתוֹ וְאַחַר כֵּן
מְשַׁכְּחִין מִמֶּנּוּ?

אֲלֵא לְפִי שְׂצָרִיךְ לְהַאֲרִיב אוֹר ה' כְּדֵי
שְׂיִהְיֶה יְרֵאָתוֹ עַל פְּנָיו וְאַהֲבַת ה' וּפְחָדוֹ
בְּלִבּוֹ. לְפִיכֵן מְלַמְּדִין אוֹתוֹ כָּל הַתּוֹרָה
כּוּלָּה שֶׁהִיא בְּחִינַת הַמְּקִיפִים וּמִמֶּנּוּ יֵאִיר
לוֹ אוֹר ה' וְכֵן אַהֲבָה וְיִרְאָה.

וְאַחַר כֵּן מְשַׁכְּחִין מִמֶּנּוּ בְּכַדֵּי שְׂתִיהֵיהּ
זֹאת עֲבוּדַת הָאֵדָם לְבַחֲרוֹר בְּטוֹב . . . אֲךֵן
הָאֵרַת הַתּוֹרָה שֶׁהִאֲרָה הָאָרֶז גְּדוּלָּה
וְעֲצוּמָה בְּנִשְׁמָתוֹ בְּטָרָם שְׁנִתְּלַבְּשָׁה
לְגַמְרֵי בְּגוּף הַחֹמֶר הִיא הַנּוֹתֵנַת כֹּחַ וְעוֹז
שֶׁמֵאִיר בָּהּ אוֹר הַתּוֹרָה אַחַר שְׁנִתְּלַבְּשָׁה
בְּגוּף הַחֹמֶר שֶׁתּוֹכֵל לְהִפְכוֹ מִחֲשׂוֹכָא
לְנִהוּרָא כו'.

To understand why a person is taught something and then forgets it:

The reason is that the soul needs to be illuminated by the light of G-d to later experience fear and love of G-d in their heart. Therefore, a person is taught the entire Torah, which serves as a surrounding light, and through it, the light of G-d shines upon them, along with the power of love and awe.

Afterward, the person forgets it, so that the individual can choose to work with their free will and choose good. . . . But the light of the Torah, which shone powerfully in the soul before it was fully absorbed by the physical body, is what gives the person the strength to bring the light of the Torah into their physical body, transforming darkness into light.

TEXT 12

Rabbi Shneur Zalman
of Liadi, *Likutei
Torah*, Shelach 44a

על ידי הארת אור האהבה ויראה
המאירים מהתורה, כי הרשימו נשאר
מהארה הנזכרת לעיל שיאיר לו אור
האהבה ויראה מתוך הרשימו שנשאר
אחר השכחה.

This is all achieved through the light of love and awe that comes from the Torah. The impression left by that original light is what enables the person to access the light of love and awe even after forgetting. It remains in the soul as an enduring impression, allowing the person to awaken those feelings even after the initial learning is forgotten.

The Torah lights the soul,
sparking love and awe of
G-d. Even if forgotten, that
light remains, letting a
person reconnect later.



TEXT 13

Rabbi Joseph B. Soloveitchik,
“Redemption, Prayer
and Talmud Torah,”
*Tradition: A Journal of
Orthodox Thought*,
17:2 (Spring, 1978), p.
69

Rabbi Simlai wanted to tell us that when a Jew studies Torah he is confronted with something which is not foreign and extraneous, but rather intimate and already familiar, because he has already studied it, and the knowledge was stored up in the recesses of his memory and became part of him. He studies, in effect, his own stuff. Learning is the recollection of something familiar. The Jew studying Torah is like the amnesia victim who tries to reconstruct from fragments the beautiful world he once experienced. In other words, by learning Torah man returns to his own self; man finds himself, and advances toward a charted, illuminated and speaking I—existence. Once he finds himself, he finds redemption.



When a Jew studies Torah, it feels familiar because it's already stored in the soul. Studying helps a person reconnect with themselves and discover who they truly are.

TEXT 14

The Rebbe, Rabbi
Menachem Mendel
Schneerson, *Torat
Menachem* 5747:2, p.
647

הַתְּעוֹרְרוֹת בְּנוֹגַע לְ"שִׁיר עֶרֶשׁ" שְׁמוֹמְרִים כְּדִי
לְהַרְדִּים הַתִּינוּקוֹת: לְדַיֵּיק שְׂיִהְיוּ עִם תִּיבוֹת שְׂיִישׁ
בְּהֶן תּוֹכֵן שֶׁל קְדוּשָׁה (כְּמוֹ הַשִּׁיר שֶׁ"תּוֹרָה הִיא
הַסְּחוּרָה הַיּוֹתֵר טוֹבָה").

וְלֹא כְּמוֹ שְׁטוּעֲנִים אֲחֵרִים — לְמֵאֵי נִפְקָא מִינָה
לְתִינוּק בֶּן יוֹמוֹ שֶׁנּוֹלַד זֶה עֵתָהּ? הֲרִי, לְכַאוּרָה,
אֵינוֹ רוֹאֶה וְאֵינוֹ שׁוֹמֵעַ הַנֶּעֱשֶׂה סְבִיבוֹ!?

אֲבָל לְאֲמִיתוֹ שֶׁל דְּבַר אֵינוֹ כֵּן, וְאֲדַרְבֶּה - תּוֹרַת
אֲמֵת וְתּוֹרַת חַיִּים (הוֹרָאָה בְּחַיִּים) גִּילְתָּה לָנוּ
שְׂיִישׁ בְּזֶה נִפְקָא מִינָה מִן הַקְּצָה אֶל הַקְּצָה!
וְכַמְבוֹאֵר בְּסִפְרֵים, דָּאָף עַל פִּי שְׂאִין יוֹדְעִים אִם
הַדְּבָרִים הִגִּיעוּ לְאֲזְנוֹ וְעֵינָיו הִגְשָׁמִיִּים שֶׁל
הַתִּינוּק, הֲרִי דְבַר בְּרוּר שֶׁהִגִּיעוּ (עַל יְדֵי אֲזְנוֹ
וְעֵינָיו הִגְשָׁמִיִּים) לְפָנֵימִיּוֹתוֹ, שְׁנִשְׁמָתוֹ שׁוֹמֵעַת
וְרוֹאֶה (וְעוֹד יוֹתֵר שְׂהִיא "דְּעֶרְהָעֶרְט") אוֹתָם

וְכָל זֶה עוֹשֶׂה רוּשָׁם חָזָק עַל הַתִּינוּק עַל כָּל מְשֻׁדָּ
יְמֵי חַיָּו..

Regarding lullabies parents sing to soothe babies to sleep: it's important to be careful that the words contain holy ideas, like the song "Torah Is the Most Precious Commodity."

Some might argue, "What difference does it make to a newborn baby who has just been born? After all, they don't see or hear what's going on around them!"

But in truth, this is not the case. On the contrary, the truthful, living Torah that guides our life teaches us that there is indeed a significant effect, even if it might seem imperceptible at first! As is explained in the holy books, even if we don't know whether the words reached the baby's physical ears or eyes, we can be certain that they did reach their inner being. The soul of the baby hears and sees—and even more, it "absorbs" them.

This has a profound impact on the child, leaving a lasting impression that will influence their entire life.



The Rebbe often emphasized the old custom of singing Yiddish Torah songs to babies, whose souls absorb the holy teachings like receiving the Ten Commandments on Shavuot and beyond.

KEY POINTS

1. Jewish men from ages twenty to sixty were counted in the desert, but the Levites were counted from one month old, highlighting their unique role.
2. The Levites were set apart as the “guardians of the sacred,” with a special role in the service of the Tabernacle.
3. The distinction in counting reflects not just their service but the spiritual value of every member of the tribe, regardless of age.
4. The tribe of Levi’s role as “keepers of the holy” teaches us that every Jew, regardless of age or perceived ability, is integral to preserving and honoring the sanctity of G-d’s dwelling.
5. The lesson extends to the importance of educating even very young children, as their souls absorb holiness from the earliest age.

