

# EVERY JEW IS PRECIOUS

*by Rabbi Yaakov Menken*

*"Count the heads of all the congregation of the Children of Israel, by their families, by the houses of their fathers, by the number of names, every male by their heads." [Numbers 1:2]*

Rashi, Rabbi Shlomo Yitzchaki, says that it is because of G-d's love for the Jewish people, because of how dear they were to Him, that He counted them constantly. When they went out of Egypt, He counted them, and after the sin of the Golden Calf, He counted the fallen to know how many remained. And now, in our portion this week, He counts them yet again.

So every Jew is precious -- but as we also see this week, we have many different roles to play. The People were divided by their flags, their tribes, and by their families. One person was part of the tribe of Dan, and camped in the North, under the flag of his own tribe. Another was a member of the tribe of Gad, which camped at the opposite end, in the South, under the flag of Reuven. But each one was a crucial part of the whole.

As Rabbi Yisrael Meyer Kagen, the Chofetz Chaim, pointed out: the Tent of Meeting, with the camp of the Levites, traveled in the Center. Because the Torah was carried in the Aron, which was in the Tent of Meeting, it had to be "inside" the camps. It had to be in the center, not close to one but far from the other. The Chofetz Chaim compares the Torah to the human heart, which must be in the center of the human body, pushing blood out to all the extremities. So too, every Jew is nourished by Torah, and the Torah must be accessible to all.

Torah is close to every one of us, and every Jew has a unique portion in Torah. It is here for us to learn, and find spiritual nourishment within it. As we approach the holiday of Shavuot, when we received the Torah, let us take this opportunity to grasp hold of it, and fulfill our unique spiritual missions.

Good Shabbos,  
Rabbi Yaakov Menken

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