

פרשת במדבר

כאשר צוה ה' את משה ויפקדם במדבר סיני [1,19]. This פסוק seems unnecessary. Of course, when Hashem commanded משה to do something, in this case to count the בני ישראל, it was as good as done. What does the Torah want to convey by spelling out to us that Moshe counted precisely as Hashem commanded?

Rav Moshe Feinstein, זצ"ל, explains that the idea of taking a census is something that we find commonly done by many nations of the world. This is because there is a national interest in knowing how many citizens are in the country. Knowing how big the population is, can indicate its strength against its enemies. It also helps to provide for the needs of the people. One may think that perhaps now that Hashem commanded Moshe to count them, Moshe as their leader, will want to take advantage of this opportunity and count the בני ישראל with their interests also in mind. Therefore, the Torah repeats and says כאשר צוה ה' את משה ויפקדם במדבר סיני that Moshe counted the בני ישראל only to fulfill the directive of Hashem. When we rely on Hashem, He is able to help us regardless of our population size. Therefore, says Rav Moshe, it is inappropriate for us to have in mind any extra fringe benefits.

This attitude should be felt with all Mitzvos and is most appropriate for Shevuos, זמן מתן תורתנו. When we do a Mitzvah, our sole intention should be to fulfill the רצון ה'. Someone who, for example, gives Tzedaka with the intention of also receiving a tax deduction, is not doing the Mitzvah solely for Hashem. The tax deduction may be an added benefit but our motivation in giving should be totally to fulfill Will of Hashem. The Vilna Gaon, זצ"ל, said, as quoted by his brother לעולם חז"ל say ספר מעלות התורה, ג"ר אברהם קרמר זצ"ל, that even though יעסוק אדם בתורה ומצות שלא לשמה שמתוך שלא לשמה באה לשמה, nevertheless, when doing מצות שלא לשמה, a person should always strive that ultimately he will do them totally לשמה.

Have a good Shabbos

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