



SOMETHING WE ALL CAN DO

HARAV Y. REUVEN RUBIN SHLITA

I have started and stopped too many times. Even approaching the keyboard has been a difficult task. What words are there? Where can one start? I share these thoughts a few days after the tragedy of Meron, and I still can't get it all together. Owing to the vagaries of the publishing schedule, you will be reading this just before Shevuos, sometime after the disaster, so you will have heard much that I can't yet know, and have seen Daas Torah directing us in ways I haven't been blessed to learn of yet. What I write now is just my humble attempt to find strength at this dark hour, and I hope I will not be found wanting.

"Count the heads of the entire congregation of Bnei Yisroel by their families, by their father's households, by number of the names of every man according to the headcount." (Bamidbar 1:2)

Hashem surely knew the exact number of Bnei Yisroel. In fact, when Moshe came to count the Tribe of Levi, whose census included young infants, Moshe went from one tent to another and a Heavenly Voice informed him how many children lived within each one. Why then was Moshe commanded to count Bnei Yisrael himself? Clearly the census was not just to tally their number, but had some deep significance and benefit for every Yied who was counted.

The Shulchan Aruch states that Parshas Bamidbar is usually read on the Shabbos immediately preceding Shavuos, so apparently the counting in this parsha is somehow in preparation for Kabbolos Hatorah. By counting each Yied



Adass Aish Kodesh

Harav Y. R. Rubin Shlita

36 Bury Old Road

Prestwich – Manchester

M25 0FT



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individually, Moshe Rabbeinu impressed upon each one his individual importance.

The horrendous loss of those sweet neshomahs in Meron counted for so much of what we as a people are meant to be, they were an integral part of Klall Yisrael and for us to ever reach our perfection we must somehow work on bringing zchusim to their departed neshomahs.

Perhaps we can begin by looking within ourselves. We each have points of spiritual weakness that causes us to lose focus on how vital our mitzvos are to the world. Every one of us has their own particular challenge, that one mitzvah that we find the most difficult. This is all Hashem's plan, we are here to fix something in this material world and it is at that point that the yetzer horah exerts the most pressure. When we stand strong in the face of those challenges, we create fresh healing and completeness in the chaos that is our golus.

Those wondrous neshomahs were dancing with open hearts on that Lag B'omer. The flames joined their own beating hearts in unification with the Torah of Rebbe Shimon. Suddenly they were taken for a purpose beyond our understanding. We know nothing of the Eibishter's ways, but they are just and right. What is in our hands is our ability to make good what is challenging in our personal lives and do so in the merit of those holy souls who have been ripped from us.

Shavuos is not only a festival of Torah. It is also a festival of the eternal faith that was planted in our nation at Har Sinai and has been carried in our hearts ever since.

Rebbe Yisrael of Ruzhin zt"l taught that in our times, just saying Shema Yisrael with kavanah is harder than climbing straight up a smooth wall.

We have been severely challenged over the past year, and just as we felt things easing, we were thrown into the cauldron of pain and grief for those neshomahs of Meron. We are being called upon to climb up that smooth wall with Shema Yisrael on our lips. This will hopefully bring the Moshiach with our final Redemption, and those dancing souls of Meron will once again join us all on the mountain top with Rebbe Shimon.