

PARASHAT PINCHAS-2015

פרשת פינחס -5775

At the end of forty years of wandering in the wilderness we are introduced to the second census of our people since leaving Mitzrayim (Egypt). The first census which was recorded in parashat Bamidbar was taken shortly after the exodus from Mitzrayim... Virtually all the people counted in the first census died in the Midbar (wilderness) and did not make it into the Land of Israel. The people counted in our parasha represent the “new generation”- the people who are about to enter The Land,

The Chafetz Chaim brings our attention to a very striking phenomenon. The total tribe of Binyamin was 45,600 (26:41). In terms of total population, Binyamin was the fourth smallest Shevet (tribe). Shevet Dan, which is recorded right next to Binyamin, had 64,400 (26:43), making Dan the second most populated Shevet. What makes this statistic so fascinating is because Binyamin had ten sons (Bereishit 46:21), while Dan had only one son (Bereishit 46:23). Furthermore, that single son that Dan had was severely handicapped; he was deaf.

The Midrash points out that this handicapped son of Dan, whose name was Chushim, killed Eisav with a club when he tried to interfere in the burial of Yaakov Avinu in the Me'arat HaMach'pela. All the other children and grandchildren took the interference in stride and acted lackadaisically because they heard about Eisav's audacity many times. But Chushim, due to his deafness was not always aware of Eisav's interferences, and when he saw what Eisav was now trying to do, he immediately took a club and killed Eisav.

Imagine a family sitting at a Shabbat table at the home of Yaakov Avinu. Yaakov, seated at the head while his sons are seated around the table. Binyamin's ten children are all eager to say their Dvar Torah, and all are singing Zemirot L'Shabbat. Poor Dan, has only one son who is deaf and unable to participate in the singing, in the discussions and Divrei Torah. Yaakov and Leah are concerned and wondering, “What is going to be with the poor tribe of Dan? How will he ever be able to make a living? How will he ever find a Shidduch? Dan must be losing sleep at night worrying about the future of his Shevet”.

Any educated statistician would surely have concluded that Dan would be the smallest and weakest link in the chain of tradition of Yaakov Avinu. Binyamin, on the other hand, according to any educated guess should have easily become the greatest of all Shevatim. Yet, that is not what happened, Binyamin had a relatively small tribe while Dan became one of the largest-from his single handicapped son.

What is the lesson? Life is unpredictable.! What are the chances that King Achaz, an idol worshiper should have a righteous son like Chizkiyahu, who was a great Tzaddik, and Chizkiyahu's son should be Menasheh a cruel king and a Rasha? It's unpredictable and in the hands of HaShem. Is there any guarantee that our children and grandchildren will turn out the way we would like them to be? Certainly not. We need Siyata Dishmaya (help from Above). But we have to do our hish'tad'lut (best effort). Send them to the right schools, keep an eye on who they befriend and socialize with, do a lot of talking about our Hash'kafa at the Shabbat table, and then, hope for the best.

Shabbat Shalom from **Yerushalayim**
Rabbi Aharon Ziegler (052- 611 9419)