

Don't Forget to Count Omer!

Young Israel of the Main Line Weekly Update

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Rabbi Avraham Steinberg

We would like to recognize our many members who are graduating from various institutions during this season. If you know of people who have reached such milestones, please send us the name of the graduate and where he/she is graduating from.

We regret to announce the passing of **Mrs. Adele Brodstene**, aunt of our members Eve Rosen and Seth Yoffe. The funeral will take place, IY"Y this **Sunday, June 5th at 1:00 PM at Roosevelt Cemetery**. We are a few men short of a minyan. If you can help us, please contact me. May the family be comforted among the aveilei Tzion V'Yerushalayim.

Mazel Tov to Adina and Dov Goldman, and to Risa and Steve Goldman, on the birth of **Sheindel Elisheva**.

YIML invites you to a community picnic on Sunday, June 26, 2005 from 11:00 AM to 3:00 PM at General Wayne Park (Montgomery Ave. west, past Meeting House Lane, next right onto Maplewood Ave., ½ mile to park). For more information, call Dr. Gary Diamond at (610) 664-7690. Cost: \$18 per Adult, \$5 per Child (2+), \$50 Fam. Max.

Youth Program: Come see our exciting and expanded Youth Program in the Upstairs Suites each Shabbos. Toddlers, Boys Groups, Girls Groups – 9:45-11:15.

As the year comes to an end, we will be, once again, looking for young men and women to help run our Shabbos Youth Program. If you or someone you know would be interested, please contact our Youth Program Supervisor, Mrs. Judith Levitt - (610) 668-9657.

The Friedman family has requested that those wishing to make a tax deductible contribution in Seri's memory consider contributing to the "**Seri Friedman Memorial Scholarship Fund**." For more information, please speak with Daniel Eisenberg or e-mail him at eisenber@pol.net.

There will be a video presentation at YIML this Sunday, June 5th at 8:00 p.m. entitled *The Next Move, Captivating Ideas, Brilliant Insights, Refreshing Perspectives, to Inspire a Genuine Appreciation of Tzenius*. Among the speakers are Reb Feige Twerski and Mrs. Bella Weinreb. For women and girls only. Dedicated L'iluy Nishmas Rebbetzin Zahava Braunstein and **Serach Dina Bas Shalom Dovid**.

All submissions, suggestions, and sponsorships should be directed to Moshe Eisenberg, creator of this Weekly Update.

June 3-10, 2005

Parshas Bamidbar

פרשת במדבר

Shabbos Davening Times

Earliest Candle lighting:	6:52 p.m.
Candle lighting:	8:07 p.m.
Mincha - Friday:	7:00 p.m.
Sof Zman Krias Shema:	9:16 a.m.
Shacharis:	8:45 a.m.
Mincha followed by Shalosh Seudos:	7:50 p.m.
Maariv:	9:10 p.m.

Weekday Davening Times

Shacharis – Sunday:	8:00 a.m.
Shacharis – Mon, Thurs:	6:40 a.m.
Shacharis - Tues, Wed, Fri:	6:50 a.m.
Mincha/ Maariv (Sun-Thurs):	8:15 p.m.

The *Chevra Mishnayos* is finishing Seder Nizikin. The siyum is planned for the Neilas Hachag (between Mincha and Maariv) on the 2nd day of Shavuot. If you would like to sponsor the siyum, please speak to Moshe Eisenberg.

'Four Corners' Baseball Team - Yasher Koach to Gershon ben Shalom and his teammates for the formation and organization of the new Young Israel - Aish HaTorah Softball Team called "The Four Corners". They will be playing against Beth Am this Sunday at 9:15 AM - South Ardmore, field #3. Go Team!

There will be a CPR (Adult/Child/Infant) Class for women at YIML on Sunday, June 26 at 10 a.m. Details to come. A men's CPR Class is being organized for July.

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Shiurim*



DAY	TIME	TOPIC	SPEAKER	NOTES
Shabbos	8:15 a.m.	Chumash Shiur	Rabbi Steinberg	
Shabbos	6:50 p.m.	Pirkei Avos	Rabbi Steinberg	Perek 5
Sunday Morning	After Davening	Sefer Hachinuch Shiur	Rabbi Steinberg	
Mon., Wed.	After Maariv	Mishna Berura Hilchos Shabbos	Eli Back	
15 minutes before Shacharis on Sun.-Fri.		Orchos Tzadikim	Rabbi Steinberg	
Monday	9:30 a.m.	Women's Tehillim Group	--	Eisenberg home
Tuesday night	After Maariv	Gemora Shiur, 10 th Chapter of Pesachim	Rabbi Steinberg	
Wednesday	9:00 p.m.	Women's Pirkei Avos Shiur	Rabbi Steinberg	The late start allows men to return after Maariv before shiur.
Thursday night	10:10 p.m.	Nefesh Hachaim	Rav Sholom Kamenetsky	

Parsha Musings by Rabbi Steinberg

Hand in Your Papers

It is final exam season once again, and my heart goes out to all of the students who will have to suffer that dreaded moment – the moment when you “give in your test.” It is not even so much whether the answers are right or wrong, but the mere fact that one’s aptitude and achievement – one’s entire “self” – is transferred to ink and paper, to be scrutinized and graded, that is so unsettling. It is an intense moment.

And this concept is not without parallel (albeit on a much deeper and more significant level) in our Parsha.

Parshas Bamidbar, as we know, begins with the census of the Jewish people. The Ramban comments, famously, that one of the benefits of the count was the process itself. The mere fact that every member of the Jewish people had to appear before Moshe and Aharon and merited a moment of their undivided attention was a most invaluable experience. Henceforth, when these great leaders would pray on behalf of their people, there was a personal memory of and connection to each and every one of them. This momentary relationship itself was a goal of the counting. (See Ramban 1:3, who explains that the connotation of the word *tifkedi* is to give special attention. In his commentary to 1:45, he explains the benefit of the personal encounter with Moshe and Aharon.)

But were this to be the extent of the experiential benefit of the census, then it was of very limited duration – a fleeting moment with the *Gedolai HaDor* (great men of the generation). I believe, however, that according to some Commentators, it was a more lasting experience.

How was the census achieved? Rashi asserts that it was by means of a half-shekel collection from each Jew, just as the count in Parshas Ki Sisa was carried out.

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However, many Commentators disagree with this contention (see Kli Yakar 1:2, s.v. *kol zachar*) and maintain that the Torah’s omission of any mention of a half-shekel collection indicates the absence of any such procedure. The Netziv (*Haamek Davar* 1:2, s.v. *b’mispar shemos*) asserts that the count was taken exactly as the verse implies – by “counting names.” Each Jew submitted a card with his name and tribe on it. All of the names were then counted. Later in his commentary (1:42), the Netziv records that his father-in-law (the esteemed Rabbi Yitzchok of Volozhin) had a tradition in the name of the holy *Arizal* that this was, in fact, how the count was taken.

The Arizal had explained that a subtle textual difficulty can be resolved with this understanding. If we read the text carefully, we will find that with regard to the census of each of the tribes, the Torah begins by saying *livnei Shimon* (for the family of Shimon), *livnei Gad* (for the family of Gad), etc. But when we come to Naftali, it does not say “livnei” (for the family of) but rather “bnei” (the family of). The Arizal explained this anomaly: all of the people gave in slips with their names on them. The names were all put in a very large box. Then, the tribal leaders came forward and each took out the cards containing names of members of his tribe, and placed them in his own box. Having collected all of his tribe’s members’ names, the leader would count and announce the sum of all of the tags in his box. However, since the tribe of Naftali was counted last, it was not necessary to collect their names and move them to a separate box. Rather, the leader simply counted the names remaining in the large box, after all of the other tribes had taken their names out. Thus, for every other tribe it was a count of the names that came out “for” the tribe. Naftali, however, was merely a count of the number of members, without having been drawn especially “for” the tribe.

If the counting process was, in fact, as the Netziv describes, then the Ramban’s concept of personal attention is taken a level further.

In the world of Chasidism, the Chasid in need has always traditionally come to the Rebbe with a *kvittel* – a piece of paper with one’s name on it for the Rebbe to refer to when praying on the Chasid’s behalf. This practice was taken so seriously, that at times Jews seemed to have gone “a little overboard” with it. (See Responsa Maharsham 3:225, who records an incident in which a certain Rabbi allowed a Jew to ask a Gentile to write and send a kvittel to the Belzer Rebbe who was visiting the city of Brod on Shabbos, so the Rebbe could pray for an ill person. When the great Rabbi Shlomo Kluger, Chief Rabbi of Brod, heard of this ruling he was irate and he had the Rabbi removed from his Rabbinic position. The Belzer Rebbe himself was also very upset at this ruling. But this incident gives a picture of how seriously *kvittel* were taken by Jews.)

Some say that the source of having a great Jew pray on one’s behalf is from the above-cited Ramban’s commentary on this week’s Parsha. Perhaps, then, the source of the practice of giving a kvittel can also be found in our Parsha, if we follow the Netziv’s understanding. It is very special to have an encounter with a *Gadol* (great person). It is even more special if we leave him with something permanent that is representative of ourselves.

How much more so with the *Ribbono Shel Olam*. Perhaps this is the feeling that drives some people, when standing at the *Kosel* to put in a piece of paper with their name and request on it. We all long for an encounter with *HaKadosh Baruch Hu*, and we cherish the moments of closeness and try to keep them alive forever.

Wishing You a Good Shabbos,
Rabbi Steinberg