

The Spiritual Significance of Numbers

by Dr. Meir Tamari

WHO KNOWS ONE (part 2)

Hashem is One so He is the sole ruler of the universe; His Unity makes it possible for righteousness and justice, chesed ve'emet, to be imposed on the world, with or against the will or consent of humanity. Shema Yisrael is immediately followed by Baruch Shem K'vod Malchuto, The announcement of His Unity is immediately followed by the declaration of His Sovereignty. This is the proclamation of the ultimate triumph and kingship of justice and mercy. His Will of Chesed and Emet, of acts of undeserved kindness and of truth, is supreme over history, over whichever and whatever philosophies and creeds human beings teach or conceive.

The kedusha of the individual is a first principle; anshei kodesh, people of holiness. Menachem Mendel of Kotsk taught people holiness. All men are created in [of] His Image; there is Tzelem Elokim in all and everyone. This requires appropriate behavior of all human beings but also appropriate behavior to all of them. Being a descendant of the Avot immediately implies this. That is how Yosef could protest his innocence of theft by simply saying, "I am a Hebrew youth". Yona similarly explained why the storm at sea came solely to force him

to go to Nineveh as Hashem commanded him. Moshe argued that he should at least be buried in the Land as Yosef was. "Yosef announced his being a Hebrew even in the jail whereas the daughters of Yitro told of the Egyptian who saved them. That was the reason for Moshe's exclusion even from burial in Eretz Yisrael, while Yosef is buried in Shechem in the Holy Land.

The second principle is the kedusha of community. A community poses a religious entity over and above the sum of the moral and spiritual souls which constitute it.

When there is a minyan of Jews, ten, there is the minimum requirement for a community. We learn this from Moshe calling the 10 spies, 'this community' - this irrespective of the purpose or nature of their communality. So the minyan is not just for communal prayer but the minimum for all the social, ritualistic, educational and political activities of the Jew.

The third principle is the all-inclusiveness of the community. "An Israelite is an Israelite even when he is a sinner." We all like to think only of the good Jews but all too often forget that there are unfortunately many others. These include the unfortunate, the poor, orphans and widows but also the visitors and the strangers who are far more common today than ever before in history because of the ease of modern day mobility. Probably the

most forgotten Jews of our time are those in free countries who are jailed because of crime, usually white collar, tax evasion or other economic wrongs.

The fourth principle is that of the nation-religion. This is a concept which is basically different from any idea of community-religion. "Judaism is not a religion in the usual sense of the term but is a nation-religion" (Rabbi S.R. Hirsch). So the idea of separation of state and religion is not an acceptable one; state like everything else is covered by the mantle of Torah. War, peace, diplomacy, economics, welfare, town planning etc are guided and determined by our connection with Hashem just like our personal, social and family lives.

The fifth principle is that of Eretz Yisrael as the Chosen Land. It has been taught that the Torah begins with His Creation only because of the intrinsic sanctity and holiness of this place on earth which made it His Chosen Land.

The sixth principle is that in this Chosen Land, His Chosen People are to translate Torah into reality. A reality in which all actions and thoughts will reflect the divine chesed, tzedek and mishpat that will lead Mankind to realize the visions of our prophets of the world full of knowledge of Hashem, where He is One and His Name is One.

The seventh principle is that there His Chosen People will erect the sanctuary where Mankind can speak and listen to

His Divinity. "For My House shall be the House of prayer for all Mankind" 