



**ALEPH  
INSTITUTE**  
No One Alone,  
No One Forgotten.

# TORAH WEEKLY

T"01

13 - 19 May, 2018  
28 Iyar - 5 Sivan, 5778

**Torah:**  
Numbers 1:1 - 4:20

**HAFTARAH:**  
Hosea 2:1-22

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## MISSING JEWS

How many Jews are there in the world? 13 million? Perhaps 14 million, if you're generous. How many Jews were there before World War II? Apparently the number was around the 19 million mark. So if we deduct the six million wiped out in the Holocaust, we are down to 13 million—which is exactly where we are today. So the colossal question is this: Where are all the missing Jews? Or, specifically, why in the last 60 years have we not made up our losses?

The truth is that we all know the reasons. Success, affluence and lifestyles that encourage sophisticated selfishness—why spend money on kids when we can enjoy it ourselves?—have all encouraged overzealous adherence to zero population growth. In fact, at 1.8 children per Jewish family, we aren't even replacing ourselves.

Then, of course, there are the ravages of assimilation. If every other young American Jew is marrying out, what chance do we have at increasing our numbers?

Now it is true that, traditionally, Jews were never into playing the numbers game. G-d Himself said so in the Bible when he told us, "Not because of your great numbers have I chosen you, for you are the smallest of the nations." That does not mean, though, that we should be complacent about disappearing Jews. We read in

the Book of Numbers how G-d orders the census of our people. And it doesn't matter what the size of our beard is or what type of yarmulke we wear or don't wear; at the end of the day, G-d counts what is precious to him. So if the Almighty values every single Jew, how can we allow that Jew to write himself out?

Some years ago, when I was hosting South Africa's only Jewish radio show, I interviewed a prominent leader of the World Jewish Congress. We got to talking on this subject. I asked him if he was not perturbed by the dire predictions being made then about the shrinking Jewish population. His answer was that we would probably have a smaller Jewish community, but that it would be a stronger one. Those who resisted assimilation would be proud, committed Jews.

I couldn't argue the point, but what disturbed me deeply was a seemingly nonchalant attitude and an almost matter-of-fact tone in his voice. It was almost as if to say, "So what? We will be smaller but stronger."

"So what"?! The Torah says every Jew is important enough to be counted. The mystics teach that every one of us has a soul which is a veritable part of G-d. We lost six million in the Holocaust, and a Jewish leader says, in effect, "so what?"

Only now are people beginning to realize what a visionary the Rebbe was.

## Parshat Bamidbar

Back in the 1950s, at the start of his leadership, he initiated the concept of Jewish outreach. He sent young rabbis and rebbetzins to places that were far away, geographically and spiritually. Even in the '60s and '70s, other Jewish movements laughed and scoffed at the idea. They ridiculed the notion of sending young religious couples to somewhere like UCLA in California. "They'll eat them for breakfast." "He has no chance of changing anything." "They won't even be able to remain religious themselves."

Today, thank G-d, there are over 100 Chabad centers in the state of California alone. And today, thank G-d, those same movements who initially thought the Rebbe's ideas ludicrous are themselves in the business of Jewish outreach. Indeed, it is gratifying to see his trailblazing efforts being followed by so many, including those who were very cynical in the early days.

Just over a year ago, my daughter and son-in-law established the first Jewish center in Table View, Cape Town. It is an area which has attracted many young Jewish families, but there was absolutely no Jewish infrastructure or communal presence in the area. Assimilation was a serious reality. In her first visit to the local public school, she was able to meet with the Jewish children. When she asked a boy of twelve about plans for his bar mitzvah, she was told, "My parents said I

don't need to have one."

Needless to say, his was the first bar mitzvah celebrated at the synagogue of Table View.

But you don't have to be a professional at outreach to bring a fellow Jew closer. Bring a friend to synagogue. Just get him or her there, and let the rabbis know, so they can welcome them and make them feel comfortable. You don't have to be a rebbetzin, the rabbi's wife, to invite an uninvolved Jewish family to your Friday night Shabbat table. If you know the first letter of the Hebrew alphabet, alef, teach the letter alef to someone who doesn't. If you know bet, it's guaranteed there is someone out there who does not. You can be a teacher and an inspiration even if you are not a rabbi. In fact, many uninitiated Jews are intimidated by rabbis, and need a friend for moral support and a smooth entrée to Jewish life.

Please G-d, we will all fulfill the responsibility and privilege to help rebuild the lost generation and the vanished communities of Eastern Europe. Please G-d, our nation will be strong and will grow in numbers, until every lost Jew will find their place and stand up and be counted among our people.

*By Rabbi Yossy Goldman*

## SHAVUOT

### ***Shavuot eve (Shabbat, Sivan 5 - May 19)***

Women and girls light candles tonight to usher in the holiday.

After the holiday evening prayers, recitation of the holiday kiddush. Being that it is Saturday night, special additions are inserted to mark the end of the Shabbat.

On this night it is customary to remain awake and study Torah until dawn.

### ***First day of Shavuot (Sunday, Sivan 6 - May 20)***

Torah reading: Exodus 19:1–20:23; Numbers 28:26–31  
Haftarah: Ezekiel 1:1–28; 3:12

### ***Reading of the Ten Commandments.***

All men, women and children should go to the synagogue to hear the reading of the Ten Commandments.

The Lubavitcher Rebbe, Rabbi Menachem M. Schneerson, of righteous memory, encouraged the bringing of even the youngest of children to the reading of the Ten Commandments in the synagogue on Shavuot. This is in commemoration of the Jewish people declaring: "Our children are our guarantors [that we will keep the Torah]." This, the Midrash states, was the only guarantee acceptable to G-d.

The priests bless the congregation with the Priestly Blessing during the Musaf prayer.

Many communities chant the Akdamut poem before the reading of the Torah.

Kiddush is recited, and a holiday meal follows.

It is customary to eat dairy foods today.

Candle-lighting, from a pre-existing flame, after nightfall.

Whoever will say yizkor tomorrow lights a yahrtzeit candle tonight, also from a pre-existing flame.

After the holiday evening prayers, the recitation of the holiday kiddush, is again made.

### ***Second day of Shavuot (Monday, Sivan 7 - May 21)***

Torah reading: Deuteronomy 15:19–16:17; Numbers 28:26–31  
Haftarah: Habakkuk 2:20–3:19

The Yizkor memorial service is recited (and charity is pledged) for the souls of departed loved ones.

The priests bless the congregation with the Priestly Blessing during the Musaf prayer.

Kiddush is recited, and a holiday meal follows.

Some communities have the custom to read the Book of Ruth on the second day of Shavuot.

The holiday ends tonight at nightfall.

## *In Jewish History*

### ***Sunday, 28 Iyar, 5778 - May 13, 2018***

#### ***Passing of Samuel (877 BCE)***

The prophet Samuel (931-877 BCE) was one of the most important figures in Jewish history; our sages describe him as the equivalent of "Moses and Aaron combined." Samuel was the last of the Shoftim ("Judges") who led the people of Israel in the four centuries between the passing of Joshua and the establishment of the monarchy, and the author of the biblical books of "Judges", "Samuel" and "Ruth"

Samuel was born in the year 2830 from creation (931 BCE) after his barren mother, Chanah (Hannah), prayed for a child at the Sanctuary at Shiloh and pledged, "O L-rd of hosts... If You will give Your maidservant a man child, I shall dedicate him to G-d all the days of his life..." (I Samuel 1:11). At age two, his mother brought him to Shiloh in fulfillment of her vow, where he was raised by Eli the High Priest; shortly thereafter, Samuel had his first prophetic communication (described in I Samuel 3). In 890 BCE, Samuel succeeded Eli as leader of the Jewish people.

After ten years under Samuel's guidance, the people approached him with the request, "Appoint for us a king... like all the nations around us." Samuel disapproved of their request, believing that the people of Israel should be subject only to G-d and not to any mortal king; but G-d instructed him to do as the people ask. Samuel then anointed (879 BCE) Saul as the first king of Israel. When Saul disobeyed G-d during the war on Amalek, Samuel proclaimed David the legitimate king in Saul's stead.

Shortly thereafter, Samuel passed away in his birthplace, Ramah, in the hills of Judah, on the 28th of Iyar of the year 2884 from creation (877 BCE).

#### ***Eichmann Executed (1962)***

Adolf Eichmann was hanged at Ramleh Prison in Israel following his trial and conviction for his crimes against the Jewish people, crimes against humanity and war crimes during World War II.

Eichmann was a key party in implementing of Hitler's infamous "final solution." The height of his "career" was reached in Hungary in 1944, when he managed to transport 400,000 Jews to the gas chambers in less than five weeks.