

“All the souls coming with Yaakov to Egypt.” (46:26)

Rashi observes that although Yaakov had seventy family members, the *Torah* nonetheless refers to them as “*nefesh*,” soul, in the singular. He attributes this to the fact that they all worshipped one G-d. Thus, they collectively became one unit. *Horav Yitzchok Zilberstein, Shlita*, asks why in the *brachah* of “*Borei Nefashos*” do we begin with the plural, “*Nefashos rabos, v’chesronan*,” “Who creates numerous living things with their deficiencies,” and close with “*l’hachayos bahem nefesh kol chai*,” “with which to maintain the life of every being,” in the singular? He explains that *Klal Yisrael* remains one – united under Hashem *Yisborach*. Each Jew is joined with his brother and friend. The nations of the world are *nefashos rabos*, many souls – each one out for himself, his religious persuasion and expression of his individual faith. He is not part of a unit. The blessing begins by acknowledging that Hashem created many souls, a reference to the nations of the world, to humanity. He created them for one purpose, “with which to maintain the life of every being,” to sustain and minister to the needs of *Klal Yisrael*. If they do not fulfill this mandate, their existence is unjustifiable.

It once occurred during the time of *Horav Yom Tov Lipa Teitelbaum, z.l.*, the author of the *Kedushas Yom Tov*, that a gentile anti-Semite was promoted to a very high government position. He prohibited the citizens of the surrounding communities which were under his rule from purchasing any goods from the Jews. Understandably, this incurred a tremendous financial loss for the Jewish community. Once, this anti-Semite was riding his horse past *Rav Teitelbaum’s* house. Some members of his community, who happened to be waiting to speak with him, commented that perhaps the *rav* might go out and “convince” him to retract his edict, as the financial situation of the Jewish community was dismal.

The *rav* went out and approached the gentile. His attempt at persuasion fell on deaf ears. The community was destined to starve. Suddenly, the *rav* raised his voice and screamed loudly, “If you are not the cause for us to be sustained, then your own existence is unjustified.” As soon as these words were uttered from *Rav Teitelbaum’s* mouth, the anti-Semite fell off his horse and died. There was no justification for him to continue living.