

"And Moshe counted them according to Hashem's word." (3:16)

Horav Moshe Swift, z.l., notes a disparity between the census of *Bnei Yisrael* and that of *Bnei Levi*. *Bnei Yisrael* were counted from age twenty and over, thereby facilitating an easy count. *Bnei Levi*, who were counted from age one month upwards, demanded a more difficult count. The *Midrash* emphasized this by noting that Moshe asked, "*How can I enter their tents to determine the number of babies in each family?*" Hashem responded, "*You do your share, and I will do mine.*" The *Midrash* continues that Moshe stood at the doorway of each tent. The *Shechinah* preceded him, and a Divine voice emanated from each tent stating the number of babies therein. This is the hidden meaning of our *pasuk*. Hashem's word facilitated Moshe's census.

There is a profound message to be gleaned from this *Midrash*. In order for Moshe to count *Bnei Yisrael* outside of the house, the *Shechinah* must first have penetrated inside the house. If Jewish children are to be included, if they are to be numbered as the ones who carry the yoke of *Torah* on their shoulders, then the *Shechinah* must precede each child's birth. The voice of Hashem must be heard from within the home. The *Shechinah* must totally permeate the atmosphere of a child's upbringing. This begins with his parents' own personal relationship, which should be ensconced in sanctity and purity. It continues on in a home in which prayer, *Torah* study, and *mitzvah* performance are integral components of the lifestyle. The establishment of such a home is the only guarantee that the children will continue to be counted as proud members of *Klal Yisrael*.