

"Imagine All The People..."

On the verse (-Exodus 19:2), "(They journeyed (plural) from Rephidim, and they arrived (plural) in the desert of Sinai, and they encamped (plural) in the desert,) and Israel encamped (יָחָד - singular) there opposite the mountain," Rashi quotes the words, "and Israel encamped (singular) there," and comments, "As one man with one heart, but all the other encampments were (divided) with complaints and with quarrel."

Questions:

- (i) Rashi is precise, and in quoting the three Hebrew words, "(Israel) יִשְׂרָאֵל (there) שָׁם (and encamped) וַיִּחָד," Rashi means that, --we learn from, "encamped (singular)," that it was, "As one man with one heart," and we learn from, "there," that, "all the other encampments were with complaints and with quarrel,"-- we need also the word, "Israel". How so?
- (ii) Rashi's source would be the *Mechilta* (-[Link](#); -19:12), and nevertheless, Rashi changes its wording: (a) From, "they were of one heart," to, "as one man with one heart," (b) from, "in quarrel," to, "with complaints and with quarrel," and (c) from, "(wherefore it is written,) 'and Israel encamped (singular) there opposite the mountain,'" to only, "And Israel encamped (singular) there"?
- (iii) On the verse (-Exodus 14:10), "And the children of Israel lifted up their eyes, and behold! the Egyptians was advancing (singular) after them," Rashi quotes, "was advancing (singular) after them," and comments, "With one heart, like one man": (a) There Rashi doesn't quote, "The Egyptians," while here he does quote, "And Israel," (b) there Rashi does quote, "after them," while here he does not quote, "opposite the mountain," and, (c) there Rashi comments, "With one heart, like one man," while here Rashi reverses it and says, "As one man with one heart"?

The grammatical rule in Scriptures to as when a *singular* term or a *plural* term for a nation is used, will depend upon whether we are speaking of the *action* itself, or the *intention* of the action. For the *action* itself, (a) if all are doing the same action in the same way, the *singular* term is appropriate, and (b) if all are doing it differently, then the *plural* term is appropriate. While in the *intention* (-Sanhedrin 38a), "The Holy One, Blessed be He, stamps all people with the seal of Adam the first man, and not one of them is similar to another," and therefore (-Brochos 58a), "Their minds (including feelings and passions) are unlike each other." Hence the *plural* term is always appropriate. Now, when these rules are followed in the Scriptures, then no commentary is necessary.

In the verse, "And the children of Israel lifted up their eyes, and behold! the Egyptians was advancing (singular) after them," which is the outcome of a previous verse (-Exodus 14:5), "And Pharaoh and his servants had a change of heart toward the people," hence, the emphases is on the, "after them," meaning their *hatred* for Israel. Hence, we are speaking here of the *intention* of their action, and hence, the question, why is the verse using the *singular* ("was advancing (singular)")? Thus, Rashi quotes, "was advancing (singular) after them," that it is specifically their *hatred* or Israel which, is a *feeling*, and nevertheless, in *this* feeling of hatred for Israel they were all equal, --hence, Rashi says first-- "with one heart," which brought them --hence, Rashi says second-- to act as, "one man".

In our verse, "And they encamped in the desert, and Israel encamped (singular) there opposite the mountain," where the physical *action* of encamping was already stated with, "and they encamped in the desert," hence, the words, "and Israel encamped (singular) there," must be speaking of their *spiritual* preparations --*intentions*-- to receive the Torah. Hence, being that each one of Israel were preparing themselves in accordance with their personal level of spirituality, the verse should have used the *plural* term, "And Israel encamped (יָחָד - plural) there"? Therefore, Rashi quotes, "and Israel encamped (singular) there," leaving out the words, "opposite the mountain," which is emphasizing the *intentions* (plural; *personal* preparations for receiving the Torah at Mt. Sinai), and does quote the word, "Israel," emphasizing that first and foremost --hence, Rashi says first--, the nation of Israel is, "As one man," and that it is this *innate* oneness among Israel that brought about --hence, Rashi says second-- that even though there would be *different* personal preparations of the heart, and nevertheless, here they were, "with one heart."

And being that Rashi is telling us of *two* unities that exist among Israel --(i) "One man," -the unity among the *people*, and (ii) "One heart," -the unity of their spiritual intention, a unity between *Israel and G-d*--, hence, Rashi's double wording of, "(other encampments were) with complaints and with quarrel": (i) "With quarrel (among themselves)," is contrary to, "one man." (ii) "With complaints (against G-d)," is contrary to, "one heart."

Hence, Rashi is telling us, the difference between the Egyptians and Israel is that by the Egyptians it is only their untied *intention* that brings unity among them: "With one heart, like one man." While Israel, it is our innate unity of, "one man," that brings us to having, "one heart." According to the *Mechilta*, Israel's unity was, "they were of one heart," their united *will* to Receive the Torah. Hence, the *Mechilta* quotes the words, "Opposite the mountain." In mystical terms: The *Mechilta* is saying that the unity among Israel was brought about through the Torah ("opposite the mountain"), while Rashi is saying that it was brought about through the *Yechidah*: Essence Core of the Soul ("Israel").

Nevertheless, once the Torah was given, and the gentiles are now commanded to (-Mishneh Torah, Laws of Kings Ch. 8 L. 11), "accepts upon himself the fulfillment of these seven mitzvot (-[Link](#)) ...because the Holy One, blessed be He, commanded them in the Torah," hence, the Torah gives the gentile, as well, the power to have the unity of, "one man," itself, and not only a unity as an outcome of a shared intention of, "one heart."