

Rabbi's Article II

'Individual Equality' In Being Part of 'One Whole'

On the verse (-Numbers 1:16), "These were the ones summoned by the congregation, the princes of the tribes of their fathers; they are the heads of the thousands of Israel," Rashi quotes the words, "These were the ones summoned by the congregation," and comments, "Who were summoned for every important matter concerning the congregation." Rashi commentators see this comment in one of two ways:

- (i) Rashi is coming to negate the possibility of reading, "*Kruei Haeidah - summoned the congregation*," as meaning that these were the ones who summoned the congregation. But rather, it means that they were summoned by the congregation, to deal with, "every important matter concerning the congregation." The reason Rashi negates the princes being the summon-ers, is because summoning the congregation is not an *importance* ("honor") of a prince of the 12 Tribes of Israel.
- (ii) The meaning of *Kruei Haeidah* is that they are called by the people of the congregation, in which the congregation now becomes the *summon-ers* and *decree-ers of the princes*. This is not befitting. Hence, Rashi points out that while the princes are the ones summoned, and maybe even by the congregation, but this is all only about, "every important matter concerning the congregation," in which they are needed by the congregation.

However, both these explanations are difficult to understand, for:

- (i) If Rashi is here to only explain the word *kruei -summoned*, as in who is summoning who, then Rashi's custom is to only quote the word he is explaining, and therefore, should have only quoted the word *kruei*. Additionally, as in this very instance, which is about the princes gathering and summoning each their tribe for the census that G-d commanded be taken, why would Rashi define this as a lack of importance?! Quite the contrary! Hence, we must say that Rashi's issue is not with the *content* of the princes doing the summoning, but rather, Rashi's point is that the word '*kruei*' means *summoned*, and not *summoning*. However, this grammatical meaning is simply, and Rashi has no need to tell us this?!
- (ii) The princes' being summoned by the congregation does not make the congregation superior and the princes inferior, when the congregation is summoning them for a *matter of importance*. Hence, why is Rashi telling us that the, "*kruei -being summoned*," is not talking about the princes being summoned by the congregation (*people*), but by the *matter of importance*?

In continuance to this verse, the next verse states, "Then Moses and Aaron took these men, who were indicated by [their] names." Here Rashi makes two comments: (i) Quoting the words, "These men," Rashi comments, "These twelve princes." (ii) Quoting the words, "Who were indicated," Rashi comments, "To him here by their names." Rashi commentators see these two comments to be telling us, that due to the longevity of the verses', "Then Moses and Aaron took these men, who were indicated by [their] names," instead of a brief, "Then Moses and Aaron took them," we may mistakenly think that the verse is talking about other people, and not these princes. Hence, Rashi clarifies this for us. However, it is extremely difficult to say that Rashi has any need to negate the thought that in middle of the portion, the verses', "Took these men," right after telling us, "These were the ones summoned by the congregation," would mean, "other," people, and no less, with just hinting to us, "who were indicated by [their] names," without telling us clearly who these, "others," are?!

Other Rashi commentators explain that being that the verse refers to them here as, "*men*," and not "*princes*," we may think that their being called to join in taking the census was not in the capacity of being *princes*, but of just being, "*men*". Hence, Rashi tells us, "These twelve princes." However, Rashi would then have to also explain why the verse calls them here, "*men*," and not *princes*, which Rashi doesn't explain at all?!

The explanation to all this requires that we first explore other questions on these verses:

- (i) The two verses are seemingly completely unnecessary! The first verse so because an earlier verse of (-1:4), "With you there shall be a man from each tribe, one who is head of his father's house," already tells us that, "These were the ones summoned by the congregation"?! Likewise, it is superfluous¹ to tell us that Moses followed this directive (-1:4, "with you there shall be") with the verse, "Then Moses and Aaron took these men"?! Of course Moses followed G-d's directives!
- (ii) The verses (-1:5-16) of, "These are the names of the men who shall stand with you; for Reuben... they are the heads of the thousands of Israel," were said (-1:1), "on the first day of the second month, in the second year after the exodus from the land of Egypt," which took place one month after the inauguration of the *Tabernacle*, by which the princes each brought their inauguration of the altar sacrifices. And there (-See Numbers 7:2² and further) G-d already notified us of who the princes are! Hence, why is G-d now saying, "These are the names of the men," as if saying that G-d is first now, one month later, revealing to Moses who the princes are?!

It is precisely these questions that drive Rashi to understand the verses! To which Rashi explains that at this instance of, "These were the ones summoned by the congregation," there was something new taking place now among the princes: "Who were summoned for every important matter concerning the congregation." Meaning,

1. And even if the Torah does want to tell us this, it could have simply said, (i) "And so did Moses and Aharon do," or at least with just the words, "Then Moses and Aaron took these men," without the additional, "who were indicated by [their] names"?
 2. And even though the Torah is not written in chronological order, in which the earlier event is told in chapter 7, and the later even in chapter 1, and hence, we might say that the "the five year old to (study) Scripture" doesn't know who the princes are yet, nevertheless, Rashi already told him in Exodus (-35:27) of the princes' gifts to the altar (and hence, the child would look up as to who they are).

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that previously each prince was only bound and responsible for his own tribe. However, now G-d is making each and every prince, "summoned by the --entire-- congregation," "every important matter concerning the --entire-- congregation!" And this is pursuant to Rashi's previous comment, "With you there shall be a man from each tribe," "With you there shall be: When you count them, there should be with you a prince from each tribe," with which Rashi means that at the counting of each tribe there will be the princes of all the tribes. But why? The prince is needed by the counting of his tribe, to validate and ensure that every person counted is indeed from his tribe. However, of what need is there to have any prince by the counting of any other tribe, but his?! This is what Rashi is explaining with the novelty of G-d's present appointment of the princes, that they be, "The ones summoned of the congregation: They were summoned for every important matter concerning the congregation." This will also explain the closing of this verse, "They are the heads of the thousands of Israel," for we are not speaking here of the prince just being, "one who is head of his father's house (tribe)," but rather, of each of them now being a head of the entire Jewish people ("the thousands of Israel").

With this, we understand why the names of the princes are being named as a new notification -- even though they were named but a month earlier!. The verse states (-Exodus 31:2), "See, I have called by name Bezalel," meaning that when G-d appoints and empowers one to a new appointment G-d does so by, "called him by name." Thus, here too, as the princes were hereby being appointed to an entirely new appointment, G-d does so by calling them each by name.

This additionally explains the seemingly unnecessary verse, "Then Moses and Aaron took these men, who were indicated by [their] names." Being that we are speaking of an entirely new appointment of the princes, hence, we have to presently have a second, "Then Moses and Aaron took these men," "who were indicated by [their] names," through which G-d appointed them and empowered them for this new appointment by name.

Note: With this we see that "The Lad the Typesetter" made a mistake. For in truth, the 'two' comments of Rashi, are but one, in which Rashi is quoting the verse as he explains: "These men': These twelve princes, --Who were indicated-- to him here by their names."

Why the verse is calling them, "these men," rather than, 'princes,' is now also understood. Moses' taking them now with him to the counting is not as their previously each being a, "prince of a tribe," but as "these men," who were now appointed as, "summoned by the congregation," the entire Jewish people.

What is yet left to be understood is, why does each and every prince need to be at the counting of each and every tribe, for which G-d had to now newly appoint them as, "Who were summoned by the --entire-- congregation"? For, either way: (i) If we need for the "all-inclusive census of the entire Jewish People," to be performed through one who is "connected to each and every Jew," then it would suffice to do as in the previous counting, which was performed by Moses alone. (ii) From the point that this counting was uniquely unprecedented, in which each tribe was counted separately - "Take the sum of all the congregation of the children of Israel, by families following their fathers' houses," then it should be enough with each prince being but, "one who is head of his father's house"?

The Explanation: Rashi (-Numbers 1:1) defined for us that the entire concept of the counting was, "Because they were dear to Him, He counted them often." And as the SheLaH (named so for his works, "Sheni Lucho's Habris"; Rabbi Yeshaya HaLevi Horowitz -[Link](#)) explains, that through this counting G-d made the Jewish People, each (-Beitzah 3b), "is not nullified... Any (item) whose manner is to be counted." However, this can take place in one of two ways: (i) The previous censuses, in which the Jewish People were counted as one (void of individual tribes), which comes to reveal the virtue and preciousness of the Jewish people as they stand above and beyond differences. This refers to the Essence of the Soul of each and every Jew, in which there is no difference between one Jew and another. (ii) This counting comes to reveal also the individualized virtues of each and every Jew, in which one's virtues is unlike the individualized virtues of the other. We find by Jacob's blessings to his twelve sons, that he blessed them each individually and differently. Hence, among the myriads of virtues of the myriads of individual Jews, there are categorically 12 different paths³ of Service to G-d. Therefore, this counting of the preciousness of individuals was counted tribe by tribe of the 12 Tribes. This form of counting refers to the Faculties of the Soul.

Nevertheless, also in this counting of tribe by tribe, we have the counting of the entire Jewish people as one, giving us the tally of the entire nation. This expresses that even when we are focusing upon the Individual's Faculties (differences among one and the other), nevertheless, here too, there is a detail, in which all Jews are alike, as well. Hence, in this (dual: tribal tallies and with one total tally) counting we have an antithesis: (i) There are different levels, one higher (-Deuteronomy 29:9, "leaders of your tribes," and the likes) and one lower (-ibid 29:10, "your woodcutters and your water drawers," and the likes), and therefore it is inappropriate to have the Jewish people counted as one. (ii) The entire people are also counted as one. The reason for this antithesis being combined as one (counted tribe by tribe, and as one people) is because even when we are counting the individual's (tribe's) virtues, we are doing so to express how the totality of all these individual virtues ultimately create one complete body! And in this, there is no difference between the head and the foot, in that they both equally complete the entire body, and hence, each are counted equally, carrying the value of, neither more, nor less, than one.

This is why, this counting had to be facilitated by, (i) "one who is head of his father's house," individuality and differences, (ii) as they are each, "summoned by the --entire-- congregation," part of one whole of equality.

3. We find explanations to this in the Alter Rebbe's Torah Ohr, at the beginning of Portion Vayechi: Reuben is the service of Wisdom, referred to as Sight -Roah, Shimon as that of Understanding, referred to as Hearing -Shomah, etc.