

Kinder Torah

Parashas Bamidbar

Grab Every Mitzvah

"Imma, I'm home from school!"
"Shalom, Chaim! How was your day?"
"Great, Imma! Do you have a mitzvah for me to do?"

Chaim's mother thinks for a moment.

"How about helping me set the table for lunch?"

"Great! Thank you, Imma. How about another mitzvah?"

Chaim's mother is thrilled with her son's eagerness to do mitzvos.

"Chaim, make your blessings on the food loud, clear, and with great *kavannah*."

"Fine, Imma!"

"Chaim, it makes me so happy to see your motivation to do mitzvos. Did your teacher give you some inspirational words today?"

"He surely did, Imma. Today is *Rosh Chodesh Sivan*. Shavuos is coming in five more days. This is our last chance to prepare ourselves."

"I see. Did he elaborate on what we are preparing for?"

"Yes, Imma - *Kaballas HaTorah*.

Our *minhagim* reflect that we are in the final stages of preparation. These days we do not say *tachanun*, since it is a prayer omitted on happy days, and those who have not taken haircuts until now are permitted to take them. However, the most important preparation is demonstrating to Hashem our eagerness to learn His Torah and fulfill His mitzvos. He gives the Torah to those who cherish it. Therefore, the more love we have for Torah and mitzvos, the more of the Torah He will give to us."

"That is very moving, Chaim. If I may, I would like to add something to what you just said. The Nesivos Shalom points out that *Rosh Hashanah* is the *Yom Ha'din*, the Day of Judgment, for all of Hashem's creations. *Parnassa*, health, birth, death, and all physical concerns are judged and decided on *Rosh Hashanah*. Therefore, that day requires a great preparation period - the month of *Elul* - to ready ourselves for the great judgment. "Similarly, *Shavuos* is the *Yom Ha'din* for *ruchnius* (spiritual concerns). On that awesome day, our Torah learning, *tefillah*, *gemilus chassadim*, and indeed all our mitzvos are judged. We must still do *hish-tadlus*, that is, make our efforts, in these areas throughout the year. However, success in *ruchnius* is in Hashem's hands, and He makes His decisions on the day of *Shavuos*. Therefore, these final days of preparation are very important. The day of *Shavuos* itself is even more important.

Hashem judges a person as he is on that day. If you make an all out effort to learn Torah and do mitzvos every possible moment of *Shavuos*, b'ezras Hashem you will be rewarded with a year rich in spiritual success.

"Really, Imma. I must get busy learning Torah. I don't want to miss a minute!"

"Chaim, with an attitude like that, you are sure to be blessed with a wonderful *din* this *Shavuos*."

"Amen!"

Kinderlach . . .

These days are the final days of Sefiras HaOmer. Do you remember when we began, the second night of Pesach, almost seven weeks ago? We have all worked hard since then, preparing ourselves for Kaballas HaTorah. The end of an undertaking is the most important part, because it brings the project to completion. This is your chance to make a strong finish, kinderlach. Show Hashem how much you love His Torah and mitzvos. He will reward you with a wonderful Kaballas HaTorah.



Lessons from the Desert

Rav Zalman Sorotzkin delivers a stirring message in his introduction to *Sefer Bamidbar*. He begins with a question. Why did the Bnei Yisrael need to spend forty years in the Midbar? They could have gone straight into *Eretz Yisrael*. Isn't the fastest and straightest path the best way to go? Not necessarily. Hashem showed that the roundabout way was better right at the outset. He did not lead them through the land of the *Pelishtim*, because it presented a spiritual danger. Rather, He chose the roundabout route through the desert, a land free of *tumah* (impurity).

Similarly, after *Matan Torah*, they could have gone straight into *Eretz Yisrael*. However, the land was full of idol

worship and immorality. They would not have withstood the test and would have returned to the sins they committed as slaves in *Mitzrayim*. Therefore, they needed forty years of isolation in the *Midbar*, surrounded by *Annanei Kovod* (Clouds of Glory), and accompanied by the *Shechina* (Divine Presence). There they learned Torah and strengthened their *emunah* until they were ready to enter the *Promised Land*.

The years in the *Midbar* also promoted unity. At *Matan Torah*, all were united as never before "like one man with one heart" (*Rashi - Shemos 19:2*). Subsequently, they all lived under one roof - the *Annanei HaKovod*, and ate from one table (so to speak) - Hashem's table. He served them all *mun* from heaven, and water from a miraculous well. This rooted a deep love between them. We see this unity expressed by the fact that after the forty years in the desert, no one challenged the *malchus* of *Yehoshua* or the *kehuna* of *Elazar*.

And so, in our days, when we are wandering in the "desert" of the *golus* among the nations, we can learn the lessons of the *Midbar* - to promote unity amongst ourselves, and to learn Torah and be strong in *emunah* without any of the distractions of the outside world. In the merit of this, we hope to see *Mashiach* speedily in our days, amen.

Kinderlach . . .

Rav Sorotzkin advises us to learn the book of Bamidbar well. It contains the mistakes that our ancestors made, and the suffering that resulted. We can learn from their mistakes, and stay on the straight path - to learn Torah as if nothing else existed in the world. To trust in Hashem with an unshakable emunah. To live in peace and harmony with our family members, neighbors, teachers, classmates, and all of our acquaintances. When we are united under the banner of the Torah, listening to the voice of Hashem, we will merit to hear the voice of the shofar, announcing the coming of Mashiach.

Parasha Questions:

- Which tribes were in *Machane Reuven* and on which side were they camped? (2:10-16)
- Which tribes were in *Machane Dan* and on which side were they camped? (2:29-31)
- What was *Kehas'* job? (3:31)
- What was *Merari's* job? (3:36,37)

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