

"And Hashem spoke to Moshe in the wilderness of Sinai." (1:1)

The *Midrash* states that the *Torah* was given through the media of fire, water, and wilderness. The commentators differ in communicating the message of this *Midrash*. *Horav M. Shapiro, z.l.*, suggests that these three elements reflect the magnitude of *Klal Yisrael's* devotion to Hashem to the point of their self-sacrifice.

Fire alludes to the fiery caldron into which Avraham *Avinu* was thrown because of his staunch belief in Hashem. This, however, only illustrates self-sacrifice on the part of the individual Jew. Water, which symbolizes *Klal Yisrael's* passage through the Red Sea, represents our unwavering devotion to Hashem as a whole nation. Yet, these two examples alone still do not provide sufficient proof of *Klal Yisrael's* loyalty. Surrounded by threatening animals, *Klal Yisrael* travelled in a wilderness devoid of nourishment for forty years. Throughout this period, they displayed their constant, unstinting love for Hashem. *Mesiras nefesh*, which is demonstrated by this threefold pattern of individual, collective, and constant devotion to Hashem, is evidence of the strength of our nation's bond to Hashem.