

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

Chazal note an integral relationship between the "*midbar*," wilderness, and the *Torah*. Much of the *Torah's* narrative takes place in the wilderness. The *Torah* itself was given in the wilderness, a point which *Chazal* emphasize frequently. It is, therefore, appropriate that the *Torah* reading immediately prior to *Shavuot*, the festival of the giving of the *Torah*, is *Parashas Bamidbar*. *Chazal* suggest many explanations for this connection.

Horav S.R. Hirsch, z.l., expresses a simple, but profound, idea regarding the *Torah's* ideology in forming the framework of each Jew individually and *Klal Yisrael* as a unified entity. Hashem chose the barren, free pastures of the unclaimed wilderness, yet untainted by human involvement, for *Matan Torah*. Far removed from the decadent societies of nations and cities, the wilderness set the model stage for the new foundation, which was to be supported solely by Hashem. In the desert, unencumbered, Hashem gave the *Torah* to *Klal Yisrael*. In the desert, where everything was structured from the ground up, *Klal Yisrael* received their mandate and mission.

Torah law is to be the basis of a Jew's whole essence, his entire perspective, his every movement. It is not sufficient for the *Torah* to reach man when he has attained maturity -- or society when it has already been established. The work of *Torah* begins at the origin for all earthly existence. Its sphere is the entire process of planting and nourishing nature. From its inception, all of human nature must be engendered, sustained and nurtured to fulfill the Divine requirements of morality and justice. Thus, human nature will develop the capacity to serve Hashem in purity and holiness.

The place which Hashem designated for the giving of the *Torah* communicates an important message regarding the *Torah's* status in the life of its people.