

## They journeyed from Refidim and arrived in the wilderness of Sinai. (19:2)

*Rashi* asks why the Torah found it necessary to relate from whence they journeyed. We already know that they had previously encamped in Refidim. He explains that the Torah reiterates their journey from Refidim to teach that, just as they came to *Har Sinai* in a state of *teshuvah*, repentance, in preparation for the receiving of the Torah, likewise, during their journey from Refidim they were in a state of *teshuvah*. Having said this, we wonder why *teshuvah* seems to be a prerequisite for receiving the Torah – to the point that they were in a state of *teshuvah* on the way to Sinai, as well as when they left.

*Teshuvah* is an integral component of receiving the Torah. Without *teshuvah*, we forget exactly what took place, what Torah means to us, and what our responsibility to it is. **Horav Yitzchak Yeruchem Bordiansky, Shlita**, *Mashgiach* at *Yeshivas Kol Torah*, vividly portrays this idea with a practical image. Imagine a young couple are married amid great pomp and celebration. Much excitement and joy reign until the very end of the wedding when all of the participants return to their respective homes. Yes, the *chassan*, groom, goes home, and the *kallah*, bride, returns to her pre-nuptial residence. Does this make sense? The wedding was celebrated to unite two people in matrimony. How could they go their separate ways once the wedding is over?

When *Klal Yisrael* received the Torah at *Har Sinai*, it was their collective wedding day, as they entered into a lasting covenant between themselves and Hashem and His Torah. Is it possible for one to make a covenant and remain the same person afterwards? In other words, could *Klal Yisrael* reach *Har Sinai*, and, after receiving the Torah, move on from there as if nothing had changed? Clearly not. *Har Sinai* was transformative. The men were no longer the same people who had earlier journeyed there. Likewise, every year following *Shavuos*, after having spent an entire festival reaffirming our acceptance of the Torah, could we go back to business as usual? The prerequisite for *Kabbolas HaTorah*, receiving the Torah, is *teshuvah*, to shake-off the dust and open a new page in one's rise to spiritual ascendancy.

This idea may be alluded to from the custom that we eat dairy foods on *Shavuos*, in commemoration of *Klal Yisrael* who ate dairy following the Giving of the Torah. Once they accepted the Torah, the dishes from which they had previously eaten were no longer kosher, having absorbed foods which had previously not yet been deemed unfit for Jewish consumption. Likewise, when we accept the Torah, we cannot return to the same *keilim*, utensils/vessels, through which we previously served Hashem. After receiving the Torah anew – we, too, must become new people by changing our previous standards of observance. Every instance in life which spiritually inspires us must leave an indelible mark on our character. We cannot continue along the same route, because we are no longer the same.