

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

Chazal emphasize the fact that Klal Yisrael received the Torah in a barren wilderness. The desert is a desolate place, void of any amenities. One must subsist on the bare minimum and not indulge himself in empty physical pleasures if he is to succeed in filling his mind and heart with Torah. The emptiness of the desert also symbolizes Klal Yisrael's reliance upon the Almighty. We were provided with food from Heaven, water from a stone; Hashem's miracles addressed our every need. We must realize that Hashem determines success in life, both spiritual and physical. The conditions under which Hashem gave us the Torah serve to remind us of this fact. Chazal emphasize the fact that Klal Yisrael received the Torah in a barren wilderness. The desert is a desolate place, void of any amenities. One must subsist on the bare minimum and not indulge himself in empty physical pleasures if he is to succeed in filling his mind and heart with Torah. The emptiness of the desert also symbolizes Klal Yisrael's reliance upon the Almighty. We were provided with food from Heaven, water from a stone; Hashem's miracles addressed our every need. We must realize that Hashem determines success in life, both spiritual and physical. The conditions under which Hashem gave us the Torah serve to remind us of this fact.

It is especially appropriate that we read Parashas Bamidbar on the Shabbos immediately preceding Shavuot, the festival that commemorates the giving of the Torah. Bnei Yisrael prepared themselves to receive the Torah by camping together as a single unit at the foot of Har Sinai. How were they able to transcend their petty differences, their individual attitudes and personalities in order to become one? How did they divorce themselves from all outside influences? How did they ignore all other distractions, so that they could concentrate on one thing - Kabbolas HaTorah? The Sefas Emes explains that the specific place, as well as the moment in time, communicated to them a message of separation and sanctification. We separate ourselves from the mundane and physical as we sanctify ourselves to the Almighty. The concept of a desert conveys a place in which all distractions are eliminated; nothing matters but the will of Hashem. The experience of the wilderness can be recreated on Shabbos when we consecrate ourselves by refraining from performing mundane labor, by immersing ourselves in the day's spiritual experience. Thus, Shabbos Bamidbar is an excellent preliminary to the commemoration of our receiving the Torah.