

# **Dvar Torah** by **Rabbi Chanoch Yeres**

to his community at

Beit Knesset Beit Yisrael, Yemin Moshe

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## **Bamidbar**

"And G-d spoke to Moshe in the desert of Sinai..."

The Midrash Rabba points out that this Pasuk teaches us that the Torah and wisdom can only be acquired by one who makes himself HEFKER, "Abandoned", like a desert, Midbar. What connection exists between the Torah and the desert?

Rabbi Chananel Herbsman quoted the great Mesilat Yesharim (Rabbi Moshe Chaim Luzzato 1707-1744) in Chapter 9 that one of the greatest factors which inhibit a person from engaging in Torah is his or her attachment to worldly pleasures and comforts. This is precisely the message of the above Midrash. A person must make himself into a desert, a place without all the comforts and luxuries that the world offers. Only then, will he be able to focus properly on developing his connection to the Torah.

It is quite a challenge and a difficult task for a person to minimize worldly pleasures and adopt a "desert" life, but the rewards are grand. Rashi (Sh'mot 18:5) writes that the Torah relates Yitro's journey to the desert to praise him. Yitro, until this moment, had basked in the world of honor and prestige. He left it all behind to go hear the Israelite's

Torah in the wilderness. Ultimately, Yitro merited to have a Parsha called in his name.

The Talmud (Nedarim 55a) comments on the phrase UMIMIDBAR MATANA, that if a person makes himself HEFKER, "Abandoned", like a desert, not for himself but for others, then the Torah will be given to him as a Matana - a gift. The commentaries explain that this HEFKER means that he is ready to share his learning with anybody. He then may merit to have Torah given to him as a MATANA, in the same way it was given to Moshe Rabbeinu. The Talmud (Nedarim 38a) comments that Moshe forgot some of his learning until it was presented to him as a MATANA.

As we approach Shavuot and prepare ourselves for Matan Torah, may we all continue to expand our personal MIDBAR, both in terms of our personal acquisition of Torah and in our sharing of it with others. 🏠