

SPREAD LIGHT 358



Parsha

Candle Lighting (Toronto)

Shabbos Ends

Bamidbar

8:18 PM

9:28 PM

ISSUE #23 | MAY 16, 2026 | כ"ח אייר תשפ"ו

Gematria on the Parshah: The World is a Midbar

By: Reb Moshe Herskovits



Parshat Bamidbar always falls the week before Shavuot. Chazal say this is because in order to truly receive the Torah, a person must make himself like a midbar. Why was the Torah specifically given in the desert? What does the desert symbolize?

Realizing the World is a Midbar

One symbolism of the desert is the realization that this world itself is like a desert. The pleasures and pursuits of olam hazeh are ultimately barren and temporary. The midbar represents recognizing the emptiness and vanity of a life disconnected from Hashem. When a person internalizes this truth, he can begin to appreciate holiness on a much deeper level.

This is often why a Baal Teshuvah's yearning for Hashem runs so deep. He comes from darkness into light and feels how empty everything he once pursued truly was. No matter what one has achieved in the physical world, the soul can only find true satisfaction through Hashem.

The desert is a place without planting, growth, or continuity of life. In contrast, the Maggid of Mezritch teaches that every mitzvah a Jew performs plants eternal seeds. Every mitzvah we do is literally building our personal Gan Eden.

Amazingly, the gematria of זרעים (seeds) is 327, the same as ישיבה (yeshivah), the place of cultivating Torah and mitzvot. Through Torah learning and mitzvot, a person plants eternal life within the barren desert of this world.

Rebbe Nachman of Breslov explains that just as in this world we feel compassion for those who lack food and clothing, so too in the next world the "food and clothing" of the soul are Torah and mitzvot. A person should awaken a sense of urgency for his own soul to be clothed properly in mitzvot and to extend that same care to others.

As Rav Nechunya Ben HaKaneh says (Berachot 28b), "I toil and they toil. I toil for eternity, while they toil for temporary matters." Everything physical eventually withers away, but mitzvot remain forever.

Mashal: Building Sand Castles on the Beach

A powerful mashal for this is children build-

ing sand castles on the beach. The castles can be beautiful and impressive, full of detail and effort, but eventually the waves wash them all away. So too, time erases everything in this world that is disconnected from Hashem.

This idea is reflected in the teaching of Rabban Yochanan Ben Zakkai, who asked his students: "What is the proper path for a person to cling to?" Rabbi Shimon Ben Netanel answered: Ha'roeh et hanolad — one who sees what his actions will eventually produce.

When a person constantly keeps the future in mind, he begins to maximize his time in this world and return to what is everlasting. Amazingly, the gematria of הרוואה את הנוולד is 713, the same as תשובה. True teshuvah comes from realizing that our mitzvot are eternal, while aveirot are ultimately vanity and sources of regret.

Yearning for Hashem Like Water in the Desert

The symbolism of the desert is not only emptiness. The midbar also represents yearning.

In the desert, a person desperately thirsts for water. So too, the soul thirsts for closeness to Hashem. Just as one cannot survive in the desert without water, a Jew must feel that he cannot survive spiritually without connection to Hashem.

The Alter Rebbe explains that a person comes to true love of Hashem through contemplating Hashem's love for him. Hashem continuously creates all worlds and sustains all existence, yet when a Jew sincerely prays, Hashem turns toward that individual personally. Through contemplating this immense love, one can come to deeply love Hashem in return.

The gematria of מים במדבר is 338, the same as עקב+יוסף. The relationship between Yaakov and Yosef represents one of the deepest expressions of love and yearning in the Torah. The Zohar even refers to the Jewish people as Yosef, while the nations are compared to the other brothers, reflecting Hashem's unique love for Klal Yisrael.

Water in the desert symbolizes not only survival, but deep longing and attachment. In order to truly receive the Torah, we must contemplate Hashem's immense love for us and yearn for closeness to Him.

As the Gemara in Sanhedrin teaches, the entire world was created for each individual Jew. Rebbe Nachman says we often neglect

our relationship with Hashem because we do not realize that to Hashem we are as the only person in the world. Each one of us is like Adam HaRishon in the Garden.

This idea is not only conceptual, it is reflected in the way the Tzaddikim relate to every Jewish soul.

The Value of Every Jewish Soul

There is a story of the Kapischnitzer Rebbe, known for his deep ahavat Yisrael and his tireless efforts in kiruv. Once, he approached two Jews on the street and asked them to put on tefillin. One of them responded sharply, "Why do you even bother with us?"

The Rebbe answered with deep feeling: "If I saw you in physical danger, I would not pause for a moment. I would do everything in my power to help you immediately. So too, when I see a Jewish soul without tefillin, I cannot remain silent or indifferent. I feel its pain just as deeply."

This is how we can receive the Torah anew every single day. A person must wake up each morning feeling that Hashem is personally calling him, as if he were the only one commanded to fulfill the Torah.

Challenge

When faced with the yetzer hara this week, try to pause and remember what is truly eternal. Picture every mitzvah as a seed being planted in your personal Gan Eden, something that will endure forever. In that moment, ask yourself: what am I choosing, eternity with Hashem or the emptiness of the midbar?

The Desert Within

By: Reb Adam Klasner



This week's parsha, Bamidbar, begins in the desert.

Not in a palace. Not in a beautiful city. Not in a place that feels calm, safe, or inspiring. The Torah is given in a wilderness. And maybe that's because real growth rarely begins in comfort.

Most people think spirituality starts once life settles down. Once the anxiety calms. Once the marriage gets easier. Once they finally feel confident, clear, healed, and inspired. But the Torah was not given in a perfect environment. It was given in the middle of uncertainty, confusion, and instability. Because Torah is not here to help perfect people feel more spiritual. Torah is



here to teach human beings how to walk through their inner wilderness without losing themselves.

Every person has a desert. A place inside that feels empty, disconnected, and unclear. A place where you don't know where you're going. A place where the old version of you no longer works, but the new version of you has not yet been born. Most people spend their lives trying to escape that place. But the Torah says something radical: the desert is not a mistake. The desert is where revelation happens.

The Jewish people did not receive the Torah after entering Israel. They received it before. Why? Because before a person can build a home, a relationship, a business, or even a spiritual life, they first need to learn how to stand in the unknown without collapsing.

That is the deeper meaning of the desert.

A desert is ownerless. Empty. Raw. There are no distractions, no titles, no image to maintain, no external identity to hide behind. And that is exactly why the Torah was given there. Because truth can only enter a person who is willing to become open.

Most of us are too full. Full of noise. Full of fear. Full of the need to control. Full of stories about who we are supposed to be. But transformation begins when a person is finally willing to stand honestly in the wilderness of their own life and say: "I don't fully know. I don't fully understand. But I'm willing to stay present."

That humility is not weakness. It is the beginning of real strength.

The desert strips away illusion. It reveals what is actually inside of us. And that can feel terrifying, because once the distractions disappear, we finally hear our own thoughts. We finally meet our own pain. We finally see the patterns we've spent years outrunning.

But this is also where something sacred begins.

Because the same desert that exposes us is also the place that reconnects us to ourselves. The Torah was not given to angels. It was given to people. People with fear. People with trauma. People who struggled with faith. People who carried Egypt inside of them long after they physically left it. And that is exactly the point.

Hashem does not wait for us to become perfect before meeting us. He meets us inside the desert. Inside the mess. Inside the confusion. Inside the unfinished parts of ourselves.

And maybe that is one of the deepest lessons of Bamidbar.

You do not need to escape your wilderness to find Hashem. You need to stop running long enough to hear Him there.

Sometimes the very place you thought was proof that you are lost is actually the place where your deepest growth is beginning.

The desert is not empty. It is where the noise dies so the soul can finally speak.

Away from Sin

By: Rabbi Nachum Aaron Kutnowski



Each week during the Omer period, we study a chapter of Pirkei Avos. Recently, we encounter the following Mishna:

Akavyah ben Mahalalel said: Consider three things and you will not come to sin — know from where you came, where you are going, and before Whom you will give judgment and accounting. From where did you come? From a putrid drop. Where are you going? To a place of dust, worms, and maggots. Before Whom will you give account? Before the King of kings, the Holy One, blessed be He (Avos 3:1).

A careful reader notices something unusual. Akavyah first presents three things to consider, and then restates each one with its explanation. Why the repetition? Why not simply present each consideration together with its explanation from the outset?

Moreover, the content itself seems quite gloomy. You came from a putrid drop, you are heading toward decay, and you will have to answer for everything before the Almighty. It is difficult to imagine a more sobering — perhaps even dispiriting — set of thoughts.

But al derech Chassidus, the Mishna opens entirely differently.

The second half — the explicit explanations — represents Yiras Shamayim born of fear. Confront your insignificance, your mortality, your accountability, and you will be steered away from sin. This is the classical reading, and it is a valid one.

But the first half — the three unelaborated statements — leaves room for a different reading entirely. One rooted not in fear, but in love and awe:

Know from where you came — you are a Chelek Eloka Mima'al Mamash, a literal portion of the Divine. Your soul is a piece of Hashem Himself.

Know where you are going — Lehisaneh Al Hashem Ulehanos Miziv HaShechina, to bask in the radiance of the Shechina. Your life is rewarded awesomely.

Know before Whom you give account — yes, before the King of kings. But He is the Ba'al HaRachamim, the Master of compassion of pure goodness. It is a reckoning before a loving Father who wants nothing more than your success.

The Mishna is illuminated. Akavyah offers us two paths to the same destination, away from sin and toward Hashem. One path

confronts us with our insignificance, our mortality, and our accountability. The other reminds us of our significance, our immortality, and our reward.

Protect the Most Valuable Real Estate in the Universe!

By: Rabbi Avrohom Jacks



When the Jews camped in the wilderness, they were instructed to pitch their tents around the Mishkan, or Tabernacle. Three of the 12 tribes flanked the Mishkan in all 4 directions, forming a protective square around that most precious center.

Having the Mishkan anchored at the center of the Jewish camp serves as a powerful blueprint for every Jewish heart.

Because inside every one of us there is a Mishkan, a place where G-d lives, where your truest self burns with divine purpose. And that holy interior must have a perimeter, because your ability to connect to that sacred ground is under constant threat.

In bygone times, the distractions of this world knocked at the gate. Today, they live in your pocket. They wake you up before you have had a chance to say a word to G-d, and they fill the silences that used to belong to your own thoughts with the chatter of strangers. Algorithms designed by some of the smartest engineers on the planet are competing for the exact territory that you are charged to protect.

Most people, in our modern world, have surrendered the perimeter. They have let voices that do not care about them shape the way they feel about themselves. They invite the entire world into the room where only G-d and their own consciousness were meant to dwell.

The encampment around the Mishkan was an act of fierce love. The presence of the tribes said, "Nothing gets through us. This space is holy. This space is guarded." That is the posture you were born to carry. You are the watchman of your own soul. You are the gatekeeper of your home.

So build your perimeter today. Decide what gets access to your attention. Push back the noise. Reclaim the quiet. Fiercely guard your center. By securing those borders, you create an untouchable haven that the external chaos cannot breach, and you ensure that the gentle, guiding voice of the Divine remains the most powerful force in your life.

Reminder - Count Sefira

True dignity comes with self-control. As we enter Shabbos and Parshas Bamidbar, we remember that every person has a place and purpose.

This Shabbos: bring a little more structure so your inner greatness can shine.



For inquiries or sponsorship, please reach out to spreadlight358@gmail.com



Designed & printed by innovarastudios.com