

Speak praise and do not slander

## A PLACE OF DESOLATION

### Bamidbar & Shavuot

One is able to learn not only from the parsha itself, says Rabbi Yeshaya Horowitz (1560-1630), known as the Shelah (Shnei Luchos Habris), but also from the time that it falls during the year. Bamidbar is always read before Shavuot. Thus, there is an intrinsic connection between the parsha & the holiday.

There is a glaring incongruence between the meaning of Bamidbar and the concept of the giving of the Torah. Bamidbar means desert, a place of desolation, where no one lives, no plants grow, and it is unsettled. What does this have to do with preparing for the Torah?


Furthermore, the word which follows "Bamidbar" is "Sinai." Our sages teach us that "Sinai" is etymologically related to the word for hatred (Talmud Shabbat 89a)! What does hatred have to do with Torah? Not only do the name(s) not have a correlation to Shavuot, but they indicate great negativity!

To prepare for Torah study, one must have both (metaphorically) "a desert" and "hatred."

**Desert:** divert your attention from all distractions and immerse yourself in the text itself. In order to grasp the Torah clearly, focus your attention exclusively on the Torah and empty your mind of any extraneous thoughts.



When immersed in a particular topic within Torah, your mind must also be devoid of other topics within the Torah itself. Just like a desert is devoid of people and nothing grows there, so too a person must approach the Torah in a similar way: One must feel that they are in a "desert", where there is nothing other than the Torah.

**Sinai** (hatred): It not sufficient to divorce yourself from distractions; you must actually feel a certain degree of "hatred" towards these distractions. This strong emotion will solidify your concentration and ability to grasp the Torah. Anything which may distract one from Torah study should be regarded with contempt. (Toras Menachem 5750 vol.3, p.241, by the Lubavitcher Rebbe). 

### Tanya Shiur Summer Series\*

🕒 5pm Shabbat afternoon

📍 Chabad House Zal

14401 69<sup>th</sup> Avenue

(enter on Main St. btwn 68<sup>th</sup> Dr. & 69<sup>th</sup> Ave.)

Separate seating for men & women

\*beginning in June


### Torah Q&A for Your Shabbos Table

**Q: Why doesn't the Torah state explicitly that the holiday of Shavuot is the Giving of the Torah at Mt. Sinai?**

A: Kli Yakar (Rabbi Shlomo Ephraim Luntschitz, 1550-1619) writes that the reason for this intentional omission is that Hashem did not want to limit the Giving of the Torah to one specific day (see his commentary on Lev. 23:16).

A person must view himself as if he just received the Torah that very day; the Torah must always feel fresh.

In order to help me avoid compartmentalizing and thinking that the Torah is only "new" one day a year, the Torah steered clear of directly associating the Giving of the Torah with Shavuot. It is, however, alluded to in the name of the sacrifice of the day: "A new offering."

May we receive the Torah with joy -- and internalize it! 

#### Torah Questions?

you can submit any Q's that you would like to see in this column to Rabbi Shaul Wertheimer at [rabbis@qChabad.org](mailto:rabbis@qChabad.org)

שבת שלום

# Did he know it was Shabbos?

## Chassidic Story

by Rabbi Shaul Wertheimer

The Belzer Rebbe was a great lover of the Jewish people, and was always able to find a favorable point about anyone. In fact, he used to say that nowadays, there are no "bad" Jews. Additionally, those who do not follow the Torah and its commandments are certainly not to blame, for they must have never been educated properly to appreciate the Jewish traditions.

Once, the Belzer Rebbe was walking in the street on Shabbat, with a number of his Chassidim. On a nearby street corner, they saw a Jew walking while smoking a cigarette, a desecration of the holy day.

As this anonymous Jew noticed the Rebbe and his Chassidim approaching, bedecked in their finest Shabbat clothing and *shtreimels*, he cast his cigarette aside.

The Belzer Rebbe commented to his Chassidim: "He must have forgotten that today is Shabbos! When he saw us dressed in our *shtreimels*, he surely remembered that today is the holy day and tossed his cigarette away."

Did Belzer Rebbe actually think that this cigarette-smoker truly forgot that it was Shabbat? That seems a bit naive.



The Belzer Rebbe presumably did not mean that the person actually forgot what day of the week it was, but rather, that he *forgot what Shabbat is*. He must never have been educated as to the beauty of Shabbat. Did he know that today was Shabbat? Sure he did. But he must not have known what Shabbat is.

Judging another person favorably does not mean to recite empty compliments about another seemingly-guilty person. It is our task to dig until we can uncover the good within everyone -- even, or perhaps, specifically, when it is hard to see it.

There is a point of light inherent within every one of us; sometimes, we just have to search for it. ☯

## HAYOM YOM

4 Sivan

The festival of Shavuot is the perfect time to do everything possible to advance one's Torah study and one's service of G-d with awe. Similarly, it is an appropriate time to repent for [failing to study] Torah, since [at that time] the accusing influence of Satan does not interfere — similar to the time of the sounding of the shofar on Rosh HaShanah and to the day of Yom Kippur.

## Torah Q&A for Your Shabbos Table

**Q: Why does the Torah use the phrase, "Naftali's descendants" (Numbers 1:42), in contrast to the above: "For Shimon's descendants... For Gad's descendants etc."? (v.22, 24)?**

A: Those taking the census visited the entire camp and wrote down the names in a ledger together with a note of the tribe from which each person came. After all 600,000 names had been collected in one ledger, the names were transferred into separate individual ledgers for each tribe.

This was done by reading through the original ledger and when a name from the tribe of Re'uvain was reached, they would declare, "Include so-and-so in the ledger for Re'uvain's descendants." Then the name would be crossed off the original ledger and placed on a separate ledger. The process was then repeated for each subsequent tribe.

When the final tribe, Naftali, was reached, a new ledger did not have to be made, as the census for this tribe could simply be counted from the names that remained on the original ledger. Thus, since they did not have to declare, "Include so-and-so in the ledger for Naftali's descendants," the Torah omits this term. (Likkutei Torah of Arizal)

**קבלת התורה  
בשמחה ובפנימיות**

To place:

*your ad*  
**HERE**

✉ [info@qchabad.org](mailto:info@qchabad.org)  
☎ 347.688.4770

Sponsored by:

*Douglas & Gila  
Wertheimer*

In honor of our wonderful children and grandchildren – Shaul & Tzipah, Mendel, Shoshi, Sruli, Shmuel and Zalmy."

8:01pm Candle Lighting  
8:05pm Mincha  
Followed by Kabbalas Shabbos  
8:45am Chassidus Shiur  
10:00am Davening  
6:45 Gemora Shiur (Sotah daf 48)  
7:55pm Mincha  
9:09pm Maariv / Shabbos Ends