

The Shul

at the Lubavitch Center

6701 Old Pimlico Road
Baltimore, MD 21209

www.chabadshul.org



May 16, 2026

Bamidbar — Shabbat M'vorchim — Shavuot

29 Iyar, 5786

Wisdom from the Wilderness

"Numbers" may be the name by which the fourth of the Five Books of Moses is commonly called, but in the Hebrew original it is known as Bamidbar, or "In the Wilderness." It is interesting to note that this Parshah is always read immediately before the festival of Shavuot, "the season of the giving of the Torah." What is the connection?

The Sages teach that it is not enough for G-d to give us the Torah; we have to be ready to receive the Torah. What makes us worthy recipients of this most precious and infinite gift from G-d? This is where the "wilderness" idea comes in. A wilderness is a no-man's land. It is ownerless and barren. Just as a desert is empty and desolate, so does a student of Torah need to know that he is but an "empty vessel." Humility is a vital prerequisite if we are to successfully absorb divine wisdom.



As long as we are full of ourselves and our preconceived notions, we will not be able to assimilate and integrate Torah into our being. Even if we are already somewhat accomplished in our Torah studies, we still need to remember—as the Kotzker Rebbe put it — that "as much as you know, you are still an undeveloped wilderness."

Then there is the idea that an ownerless wilderness is there for anyone to stake his claim. No person or group of people has a monopoly on Torah. It belongs to each and every single Jew, not just the rabbis or the *yeshivah* students, or the religiously observant. "The Torah that Moses commanded us is the heritage of the entire Congregation of Jacob" (Deuteronomy 33:4). While we acknowledge that there is much hard work ahead of us if we are to acquire the Torah and make it ours, we also know that with diligence and effort we can succeed. Indeed, some of our finest Torah scholars throughout the generations have hailed from the simple, ordinary folk—tailors, cobblers and the like.

Maimonides, in his *Mishneh Torah* (Laws of Torah Study 3:1), states: "With three crowns was Israel adorned—the crown of Torah, the crown of the priesthood and the crown of royalty. The priesthood was the privilege of Aaron ... royalty was the privilege of King David ... the crown of Torah is there ready and waiting for all of Israel ... and it is the greatest crown of all."

However, while Torah may be "free for all" as a desert wilderness, we must surrender ourselves to it, emptying ourselves of our ego and our preconceptions, rather than attempting to adjust it to our own circumstances and lifestyles.

And then, like the empty and uninhabited wilderness, the Torah personality may well find himself alone and isolated. We might express our strongly held values and beliefs, only to discover that we stand alone. We might display the courage of our convictions and find ourselves, like Abraham, "on the other side" of the whole world. Our principles may well prove unpopular, especially should they step on toes or upset apple carts. No matter. Being true to G-d and His Torah means standing by it, under any and every circumstance.

May the literal title of our Parshah of Bamidbar, and the many lessons it conveys, serve as a fitting prelude for the beautiful festival of Shavuot. May we receive the Torah with joy and earnestness, so that this important festival will be both memorable and meaningful.

(by Rabbi Yossy Goldman from www.chabad.org)

Everyone Counts

"...according to the number of names..."(1:3)

Chazal refer to the fourth book of the Torah as Sefer HaPekudim – The Book Of Counting. Presumably this is because of the census found in this week's Parsha. However, this is not the first census Bnei Yisroel took. We find a similar census in Sefer Shemos. What is unique about this census that Chazal would define an entire Sefer by it?

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Counting can be used for two purposes. One purpose for counting is to combine individual elements as a group. The other purpose for counting is to give each of the different elements within a group its own identity, giving the individual the feeling that "he counts". This is accomplished by focusing on each individual separately, rather than on the group as a whole. The purpose of the counting found in Sefer Shemos is to unify the Jews as a nation following their exodus from Egypt. In Sefer Bamidbar we find the expression "bemispar shaymos" – "they were counted according to their names". The reason for this is that the focus of the counting is to emphasize the individuality of each person within the group. Identifying a person by his name is a way of focusing upon his individuality. This expression does not appear in Sefer Shemos, for if the function of the counting is to unify the people as a nation, there is no need to identify individuals by name.

Very often when a person is part of a large group, he senses a loss of his individuality and self-expression. To compensate for this, he has a tendency to break away from the group. The message of the counting in Sefer Bamidbar is that there is room for individuality and self-expression within the confines of the group. Indeed, interpersonal relationships within the group can enhance individuality and offer the opportunity for self-expression.

This explains why the division of tribes and their banners are mentioned in the census of Bamidbar, and not in that of Shemos. The ability to identify oneself in connection with a particular tribe and represented by a particular banner, further enhances a person's sense of individuality.

(by Rabbi Yochanan Zweig from Project Genesis at www.torah.org)



We wish a Mazel Tov to **Ernie Gutman** on the occasion of his **Bar Mitzvah**. We also wish a hearty Mazel Tov to Ernie's parents - **Ben and Rachel Gutman**, Ernie's Grandparents, and all of Ernie's **Aunts, Uncles** and **Cousins** who are here with us celebrating this Simcha.

Ben and Rachel invite the entire shul to a kiddush following davening in honor of Ernie's Bar Mitzvah.



Sponsorship for two flower displays on the Bima during Shavuot are being sponsored by **Friends of Louie Leder** in memory of his yahrzeit on 1 Sivan.

Yahrzeits This Week:

Sarah Leder	1 Sivan - Saturday night / Sunday	for husband	Eliezer Yaakov ben Dovid Moshe
Joseph Zakar	4 Sivan - Tuesday night / Wednesday	for father	Emanuel ben Shabsi

DAVENING AND SHIURIM SCHEDULE

Friday, 5/15 — 28 Iyar

Shacharit — 7:00 a.m.
Minchah / Ma'ariv — 7:00 p.m.

Shabbat, 5/16 — 29 Iyar

Shacharit 9:00 a.m.
Sof Z'man Kriat Shema — 9:25 a.m.
Minchah — 7:45 p.m.
Shiur — after Minchah
Shkiah — 8:15 p.m.
Ma'ariv — 9:00 p.m.

Sunday — Rosh Chodesh Sivan, 5/17 — 1 Sivan

Shacharit — 8:00 a.m.
Minchah / Ma'ariv — 8:00 p.m.

Monday, 5/18 — 2 Sivan

Shacharit — 6:50 a.m.
Minchah / Ma'ariv — 8:00 p.m.

Tuesday, 5/19 — 3 Sivan

Shacharit — 7:00 a.m.
Minchah / Ma'ariv — 8:00 p.m.

Wednesday, 5/20 — 4 Sivan

Shacharit — 7:00 a.m.
Minchah / Ma'ariv — 8:00 p.m.

Thursday — Erev Shavuot, 5/21 — 5 Sivan

Shacharit — 6:50 a.m.
Eruv Tavshilin
Minchah — 8:00 p.m.
Yom Tov Candles — 8:00 p.m.
Ma'ariv — 9:01 p.m.

Friday — Shavuot, 5/22 — 6 Sivan

Shacharit — 9:30 a.m.
Shabbat / Yom Tov Candles — 8:01 p.m.
Minchah / Ma'ariv — 7:00 p.m.

Shabbat — Shavuot, 5/23 — 7 Sivan

Shacharit 9:00 a.m.
Sof Z'man Kriat Shema — 9:22 a.m.
Yizkor — after 10:45 a.m.
Minchah — 7:50 p.m.
Shkiah — 8:21 p.m.
Ma'ariv — 9:08 p.m.