

**LIVING WITH THE PARSHAH 5780, PARSHAS BAMIDBAR, MEVORCHIM CHODESH SIVAN  
By HARAV YAAKOV FEITMAN, KEHILLAS BAIS YEHUDAH TZVI**

Parshas Bamidbar is always the introduction to the Yom Tov of Shavuos. I believe that this special year the Bamidbar – Shavuos nexus has a unique significance. One of the obvious connections between the Midbar – the Wilderness – and Mattan Torah is that the Torah was actually given in the midbar. Chazal (Yalkut Shimoni Bamidbar 684) teach that the Torah was given with three elements: fire, water and the midbar. Thousands of explanations have been given for this threesome over the centuries. One of the most relevant ones for today is that of Rav Meir Shapiro zt”l. He points out that these three elements represent three situations where a person triumphed over adversity and difficulty. Avrohom Avinu was thrown into the fiery furnace of Ur Kasdim, willing to give up his life for his belief and he emerged unscathed. Shevet Yehudah, led by its Nasie, Nachshon Ben Aminadav, jumped into the Yam Suf, was moser nefesh for Hashem and led Klal Yisrael to victory over Mitzrayim. Finally, Klal Yisrael as a whole followed Hashem into the desert, a place of mortal danger and desolation, which led to Eretz Yisrael and eventual triumph. These three phenomena represent the essence of Knesses Yisrael, the nation which will give up all for Hashem and which will uphold the Torah under any and all conditions.

We are beginning, very slowly and carefully, to emerge from an extremely difficult two months, when the world, including Klal Yisrael suffered terribly. Gedolei Yisrael and ordinary people perished, often without much recognition or proper eulogy. Others have gone through many *yesurim*, often alone and without all the usual support of family and loved ones. And yet, through it all, all our people have asked for has been to have the ability to daven normally with Minyanim and to beseech Hashem in our holy places, Shuls and Botei Medrash. Surely this has been a replication of all the reasons the Torah was given in the midbar, to remind us of the great midah of mesiras nefesh. While the danger is far from over, we are beginning to see a little glimmer of light ahead. However, we dare not become complacent or self-content. Avrorhom Avinu, Nachshon Ben Aminadav and Klal Yisrael itself did not rest on their laurels and retire. We continued to struggle and fight until we had won the battle and spread kovod shomayim in the world.

Finally, there is a posuk which embodies what our attitude should be as we slowly return to our spiritual homes, the Shuls and Botei Medrash. The poskuk (2:2) says “B’nai Ysrael shall encamp, each man by his banner according to the insignias of their father’s household *at a distance surrounding the Ohel Moed* they shall encamp.” The Sefer Harei Besamim points out that when it comes to Avodas Hashem, the rule is that the further a person feels, the closer he really is. The closer a person feels, the more complacent he is, the further he really is (see Yirmiya 31:2). The Chofetz Chaim once asked the Imrei Emes (Gerrer Rebbe) “the posuk says you shall follow *acharei* Hashem. “The word *acharei* usually means far away (see Rashi); the Chofetz Chaim inquired, “how could it be that a Jew is far from Hashem?” The Rebbe answered that indeed when a Jew feels that he is far from Hashem, he is very close indeed.” This is what our posuk means when it speaks of “at a distance.” If we feel that we are far from Hashem, it is a good sign that we are right outside the door of the Ohel Moed. We, too, may have felt alienated for a few months from Hashem, but that is the best sign that Hashem was with us all along.

**A GUTTEN SHABBOS AND A GUTTEN CHODESH**

## HALACHA OF THE WEEK 5780

PARSHAS BAMIDBAR, MEVORCHIM CHODESH SIVAN

BY HARAV YAAKOV FEITMAN, KEHILLAS BAIS YEHUDAH TZVI

*This week we will continue with Hilchos Shavuos, including eating dairy and staying up all night.*

**Question:** I have a few questions about eating dairy meals on Shavuos:

1). Are we allowed to eat any meals which are exclusively milchig (dairy) or should I do what a number of my friends do which is to wash on milchig, take a break, drink something and then have fleishige (meat)?

**Answer:** The Rama (494:3) rules that the custom is that on the first day of Shavuos, people eat a milchig food and then [later on] meat.” However, many people have the custom to eat one meal exclusively of dairy. The Shulchan Aruch brings several reasons why we eat dairy on Shavuos. The Mishnah Berurah adds that he heard in the name of a Gadol that when Klal Yisrael went home after receiving the Torah, they only had dairy foods since preparing meat properly takes a long time, now that they had received and learned all the Halachos associated with meat.

Furthermore, since they now had new Halachos, their keilim (utensils) were considered treif and so they ate dairy which is easier to prepare. According to the Mishnah Berurah, it seems that the meal at which they ate dairy was their day meal, so we, too, eat dairy at that meal. Rav Shmuel Kamenetsky shlita (Kobetz Halachos, Shavuos, page 132, note 15, writes that the minhag today is *not* to divide up the meal but to have one meal which is entirely dairy. He states that although it is more logical to make this the day meal, many people have the custom to eat dairy at night. This is for two reasons. First of all, we are more lenient about not eating meat at night in honor of Yom Tov since some Poskim (see Shaar Hatzion 546:15) hold that there is no mitzvah d’oreisa to eat meat at night. Secondly since we are going to be up all night on the first night of Shavuos, it is more logical to eat dairy, since it is more easily digested than meat. It should be noted that the Munkatcher Rebbe (Darchei Teshuvah Yoreh Deah 89:19) was against having any meal completely dairy. He recommended that if one wishes to have dairy, he should have it at Kiddush after davening in the morning, make a bracha, wait a while, make a bracha acharonah and then wash and eat meat. Everyone may follow their own minhag in this matter.

2). What is the Bracha on cheesecake?

**Answer:** If the cheesecake has a crust which is tasty, one should break off a piece of the crust, make a mezonos and eat it. Then, one should separately make a bracha on the cheese (Shehakol). The Bracha after both is Borei Nefashos, not Al Hamichya because one is not eating enough crust (mezonos) during the proper amount of time (toch kedei achilas peras). One should also be careful if one is making Kiddush and relying on the cheesecake for Kiddush B’makom Seudah. This would not be enough mezonos for making Kiddush in the place of a meal, since one cannot really eat enough of the crust. Therefore, one should eat another type of cake as well, which would complete the “meal” with Kiddush. In a worst case scenario, one may rely upon drinking a full revi’is wine (preferably two) for Kiddush (Shulchan Aruch 208:2-3; 202:2; 273:5; Igros Moshe 4:43).

**Question:** If someone was up all night, should he make Birchas Hatorah? This becomes more of an issue this year if someone was up all night and then davened alone, since there is no one who slept to be motzi him.

**Answer:** Since there is a disagreement amongst Poskim, we do not say Birchas Hatorah if we were up all night. However, if someone took a long nap by day and did not have in mind to be yotzi Birchas Hatorah with Ahavas Olam, He can make Birchas Hatorah (Rav Akiva Eiger to Mogen Avrorhom 47:12).

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