

## In the Desert

By: Rabbi Yanki Tauber

In the desert there are no office buildings or factories. So if you lived in the desert, chances are you wouldn't have a job. There'd be no boss bossing you, and no underlings under you.

In the desert there are no towns or neighborhoods--you'd be neither on the right nor on the wrong side of the tracks. There aren't any department stores or grocery stores--you'd eat manna from heaven and wear the same pair of shoes for forty years.

Which is why, say our sages, G-d gave us the Torah in the desert.

Had He given it to us on Wall Street, He would have had to decide whom to appoint to the board and who should retain a controlling interest. Had He given it to us in the Holy Land, He'd have had to decide if He wants it in religious Jerusalem, mystical Sefad or hi-tech Tel Aviv. Or perhaps He'd have preferred a Marxist kibbutz or even a neo-Zionist settlement?

G-d wanted no shareholders in his Torah, no corporate structure, no social or political context. In fact, no context whatsoever. Just us and the Torah.

Wouldn't it have been great to stay in the desert?

But as soon as G-d was sure that we'd gotten the message--that we understood that the Torah is not the product of any particular age, environment or cultural milieu, and that it belongs, absolutely and unequivocally, to each and every one of us--he sent us to the cities and the towns of His world, to its farms and marketplaces, to its universities and office complexes. He told us that now that He's done His part, it's up to us to make His Torah relevant in all these places and in all these contexts.

Still, it's nice to come back to the desert once in a while. At least for a visit.

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27 May | 23 Iyar

**Bamidbar**

Shabbat Begins: 8:48 pm

Shabbat Ends: 10:06 pm