

Dvar Torah for Parshat Bamidbar

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Based on *Sippurei Maasiot (Rabbi Nachman's Stories)* #1, "The Lost Princess"

"God spoke to Moshe in the Sinai Desert ..." (Numbers 1:1).

"The viceroy knew that there was no "golden mountain with a pearl castle" anywhere to be found in civilization. So in order to find the lost princess, he struck out for the desert."

There comes a time in life, perhaps in a fleeting moment, when one realizes that so many opportunities to search for his *neshamah* (soul), the princess, have been lost. He realizes, as does the viceroy, that searching for her—finding her!—is an imperative. He becomes more than willing to spend as much time as necessary to find her. He understands and readily consents to give up his "horse" (body) and his "servant" (logic, knowledge) in order to find her. Without the princess, they are worthless.

But sacrifices and journeys into the unknown are just a first step. The viceroy is not greeted with an immediate happy

ending. The success of his search depends on his facing deep challenges: giants (great tzaddikim), who tell him that his quest is hopeless; the giants' minions, who have access to the deepest mysteries of every level in Creation, whose innocence and ages-old experience reenforce the hopelessness. All the viceroy has is his own fleeting experience—and his unshakeable faith.

As we begin reading Sefer Bamidbar ("In the Desert"), we must know that "going into the desert" is a mission that each of us has to undertake. We will face indescribably difficult challenges to our logic, to our emotions and to our faith. We must give up so much that we cherish, re-assess our values and strengthen our conviction in the necessity of the mission, of finding our lost, kidnapped princess. She is suffering. So is her Father. So are we.

Rebbe Nachman did not tell how the viceroy finally freed the princess. He says only that he did free her. So will we—if we go to the desert to find her, but not if we stay home.

agutn Shabbos!

Shabbat Shalom!

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