

# Bamidbar

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**W**e finished off last week's parsha with halachos of self-worth. In this week's parsha we find out that self-worth comes from having none. I know, I know, it sounds like an oxymoron, or just a moron. But it isn't. Making yourself like an ownerless desert that people trample all over is the secret to feeling great about yourself.

Still not convinced? Consider this. One of the most important messages from last week's parsha (aside from, do the right thing and take the blessing, not the curse) is taught by a single word: *b'keri*. It means happenstance, and it is used by the Torah to refer to Jews who turn messages from God into, well, non-messages.

In the case of last week's parsha, it specifically refers to Jews who suffer and decide to pretend that "life," not God, got in the way. That shifts of the onus of change from the sufferers to life instead.

Uncannily, I came across of a real-life modern example of this during the week of the parsha itself. It was on the cover of a magazine I stopped reading years ago because it seems to embrace exile, not work to end it. It was about the anti-Semitic

attack in a well-known city recently, and the two front page quotes basically blamed the government and local authorities for the lack of security and demanded they rectify the situation immediately before an attack occurs again.

No doubt. The government and local authorities have already proven themselves to be anti-Semitic, but are they the cause of the anti-Semitism, or just the means Heaven is using to carry it out? As the Haftarah for Bechukosai said:

God says: "Cursed is the man who trusts in man and makes flesh his arm, and whose heart turns away from the Lord...Blessed is the man who trusts in God; God shall be his trust. (Yirmiyahu 17:5, 7)

See how easy it is to act "b'keri" with Hashgochah Pratis?

And by the way, acting b'keri doesn't only mean writing off the bad as random events. It also refers to failing to adequately thank God for the good as well. When a person says a brochah perfunctorily, they're acting b'keri with God. If you bentch after a meal because that is the halachah and not because your heart is yearning to thank God for what He has blessed you with, that is acting b'keri.

Do I think that increased anti-Semitism is God telling Jews the exile is over and it is time to make plans for aliyah, the answer is yes. Do I think people will listen and learn, taking the past into account? The answer is, no. As one Canadian Jew was recently quoted as saying, "No matter how much they hate us, Israel is not an option."

Brilliant. But death is? Incarceration is? Beatings are?

This, of course, is nothing new for the Jewish People. We're only here today because of God's promise to leave a remnant of His people in every generation. How many of those

will survive remains to be seen, but the prophetic predictions are not so positive. Israel may not be an option for some, but not because they say it isn't, because Israel does. Their rejection of aliyah may actually be aliyah's rejection of them.

At the end of the day, what really keeps Jews away from Eretz Yisroel is comfort, both material and spiritual. Jews have become so invested in their Diaspora homelands that they can't imagine becoming detached from them. Material growth has been easier for them as has, they believe, spiritual growth. They have come to define themselves by where they live and how they live, forgetting about who they really are in essence.

That's why God started us out in the desert. In the "desert," you can only define yourself by who you are, what you are spiritually become. As such, there is no sense of entitlement or false pride, and you certainly can't rely on other people for survival, only God. But as the prophet said, that is the source of blessing, not curse.

That is also the basis for Kabbalas HaTorah. The more ego and sense of entitlement a Jew has, the less "room" they have for Torah. Water keeps us alive, but it is the vessel it goes into that determines how much of it we get. In one week that light will come down to fill our "vessels." Maybe it's time to visit the desert, at least figuratively.

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more information, go to: <https://www.shaarnunproduction-s.org/Shar-HaGilgulim-Course.html>.

Have a great Shabbos,  
Pinchas Winston