



The Amazing Connection between Parshas Bamidbar and Chag HaShavuos

HKB”H’s Profound Response to the Nations of the World: “Bring Me Your Geneology as My Children Do”

Next Shabbas Kodesh, we will be blessed to read parshas Bamidbar. It states in the Shulchan Aruch (O.C. 428, 4): **“ולעולם”**—קורין פרשת במדבר סיני קודם עצרת—we always read parshas Bamidbar prior to Shavuos. For, we learn in the Gemara (Megillah 31b) that Ezra HaSofer arranged for Yisrael to read the “tochachah” (rebuke consisting of a set of curses) of parshas Bechukosai before Chag HaShavuos and the tochachah of parshas Ki Savo before Rosh HaShanah. The rationale for this institution is **“כדי שתכלה השנה וקללותיה”**—so that the year may end along with its curses. The Gemara asks an obvious question: **“אטו עצרת ראש השנה היא”**—but is Shavuos the beginning of a new year? The Gemara answers: **“אין עצרת נמי ראש השנה היא”**—yes, indeed, **Atzeres (Shavuos) is also a Rosh HaShanah . . .** (on Atzeres, we are judged) **with respect to the fruits of the trees.**

Tosafos (ibid.) explain the rationale behind the accepted practice of reading parshas Bamidbar as a buffer between parshas Bechukosai and Shavuos and, similarly, reading parshas Nitzavim as a buffer between parshas Ki Savo and Rosh HaShanah: **Because we wish to interrupt and have a Shabbas prior to Rosh HaShanah on which we read a portion not mentioning curses at all; so that the curses are not juxtaposed to Rosh HaShanah. And it is for this reason that we read parshas Bamidbar prior to Atzeres (Shavuos); so as not to juxtapose the curses in parshas Bechukosai with Atzeres.**

Since we follow this practice instituted by Ezra HaSofer, and we read parshas Bamidbar as a buffer between the curses in parshas Bechukosai and “zman matan toraseinu,” Chag HaShavuos, there must be a deeper connection between parshas Bamidbar and the giving of the Torah.

Show Me Your Geneology

We will begin by introducing a passage from the Midrash (Yalkut Shimoni Parshas Bamidbar 684). It focuses on the juxtaposition of the conclusion of parshas Bechukosai and the beginning of parshas Bamidbar. Parshas Bechukosai concludes (Vayikra 27, 34): **“אלה המצוות אשר צוה ה' את משה אל בני ישראל בהר”**—these are the mitzvos that Hashem commanded Moshe to convey to Bnei Yisrael at Har Sinai. Parshas Bamidbar begins (Bamidbar 1, 1): **“וידבר ה' אל משה במדבר סיני”**—באהל מועד באחד לחודש השני בשנה השנית לצאתם מארץ מצרים לאמר, שאו את ראש כל עדת בני ישראל למשפחותם לבית אבותם—Hashem spoke to Moshe in the midbar of Sinai, in the Ohel Mo’ed, on the first of the second month, in the second year after their exodus from the land of Mitzrayim, saying, **“Take a census of the entire assembly of Bnei Yisrael, according to their families, according to their father’s house.”** Here is the pertinent passage from the Midrash:

“בשעה שקיבלו ישראל את התורה נתקנאו אומות העולם בהן, מה ראו להתקרב יותר מן האומות, סתם פיהן הקב”ה, אמר להן הביאו לי ספר יוחסין שלכם... כשם שבני מביאיין... לכך מנאם בראש הספר הזה אחר המצוות, אלה המצוות אשר צוה ה' את משה אל בני ישראל בהר סיני, ואחר כך, וידבר ה' במדבר סיני שאו את ראש כל עדת בני ישראל, שלא זכו ליטול את התורה אלא בשביל היוחסין שלהן.”

The nations of the world were envious of Yisrael when they received the Torah. They protested: **“Why are they more deserving than any of the other nations?”** HKB”H silenced them. He said to them: **“Bring Me your genealogical record . . . like My children bring . . .”** Therefore, He counted them at the beginning of this sefer, after recording the mitzvos . . . **Because they only merited taking the Torah because of their genealogy.**

This explains the wonderful connection between parshas Bamidbar and Chag HaShavuot fantastically. The Torah teaches us at the very beginning of the parsha how HKB”H silenced the nations of the world. In response to their protest against HKB”H choosing to give the Torah to Yisrael, it says: **“Take a census of the entire assembly of Bnei Yisrael, according to their families, according to their father’s house.”** Here the Torah teaches us that they received the Torah because of their lineage and ancestry.

The commentaries toil to explain the connection between the **“sefer yuchsin”** (genealogical record, family-tree, line of descent) and the giving of the Torah to Yisrael. Furthermore, at first glance, this passage seems to contradict an explicit teaching in the Mishnah (Avos 2, 12): **“והתקן עצמך ללמוד תורה שאינה: ירושה לך—prepare yourself to study Torah, since it does not come to you as an inheritance.** We see that the Torah is not inherited automatically. A person must exert himself and study it diligently; it must be earned. We will endeavor to reconcile these apparent discrepancies.

HKB”H Only Bestows Chochmah on a Person Who Has Chochmah

To explain the matter, we will refer to a teaching in the Gemara (Berachos 55a): **“אמר רבי יוחנן, אין הקב”ה נותן חכמה אלא למי שיש בו חכמה, שנאמר יהב חכמתא לחכימין ומנדעא ליודעי בינה. שמע רב תחליפא בר מערבא ואמרה קמיה דרבי אבהו, אמר ליה אתון מהתם מתניתו Rabbi Yochanan said: HKB”H only bestows chochmah upon one who possesses chochmah, as it states (Daniel 2, 21): “He gives wisdom to the wise and knowledge to those who know how to reason.” Rav Tachlifa bar Maarava heard this statement and repeated it to Rabbi Abahu. He said to him: You learn it from there, but we learn it from here; for it is written (Shemos 31, 6): “In the hearts of all that are wise-hearted, I have placed chochmah.”**

We learn an important principle from this passage. HKB”H only confers the Torah’s chochmah upon someone who has already achieved the status of a “chacham”—a wise person. This is the message conveyed by the passuk: **“יהב חכמתא לחכימין”**. Thus, it is apparent that in preparation for receiving the Torah, one must strive to be considered a “chacham.” By doing so, HKB”H will confer upon him the chochmah of the Torah.

Now, however, we must endeavor to unravel the enigma that occupies the commentaries. The passuk—**“יהב חכמתא לחכימין”**—indicates that it is incumbent upon a person to acquire the first chochmah. In that merit, HKB”H will confer upon him His chochmah. What is this first chochmah that a person must acquire on his own in order to be endowed with HKB”H’s chochmah?

It appears that we can explain the matter based on a vital principle gleaned from the incredible teachings of the Chasam Sofer related to the receiving of the Torah. Every Torah-scholar must remember at all times that at Har Sinai we only received Torah she’b’chsav and a large portion of Torah she’b’al peh. Large portions of Torah she’b’al peh, however, remained stored and concealed with HKB”H. He waits with great anticipation for Yisrael, in each and every generation, to come along and dedicate themselves to the study of Torah. As a result of their exertion in the study of Torah, they will reveal portions of the Torah that have yet to be revealed. These are “chiddushim,” novel interpretations of halachah and Aggadah—concerning both the plain meaning and mystical implications—proposed by “talmidei chachamim” in every generation. Here are the words of the Chasam Sofer in Torah Moshe (Vayeitzei):

“הלומד התורה וההלכות כמו שניתנו מאת ה' מן השמים, ואינו רואה לחדש בה דבר, וזה אינו נכון כי ה' חפץ להגדיל תורה ולהאדירה, כי מלבד התורה שניתנה לנו, עוד (משלי ב-ז) צפון לישרים תושיה, מה שתלמיד ותיק מחדש בכל יום תמיד, והוא עודנו גנוז אצל נותן התורה יתברך שמו. וזהו (שם ד-ב) כי לקח טוב נתתי לכם תורתי אל תעזבו, אף על פי שלקחי טוב אשר נתתי לכם ממש, והיא עתה תורתכם, כי לא בשמים היא, מכל מקום 'תורת'י' מה שנשתייר עדיין אצלי, חלק כל תלמיד חכם ותלמיד חכם, אותו אל תעזבו גם כן, הזהיר פה מלעסוק רק בחלק הנקרא לקח רק גם להיות מחדש חידושים טובים”

In his Derashos, the Chasam Sofer writes that HKB”H endowed the souls of Yisrael with additional “binah”—intuition—enabling them to unveil the treasures of the Torah are still concealed. Here is the pertinent excerpt:

“כי התורה הקדושה טמונה בתוכה כל טוב ה' וכל אוצרותיו, אך התחבולה להוציא המטמונים ההמה מסר הקב”ה בחשאי לישראל, רצוני לומר שנטע הקב”ה בטבע ותולדותם בינה יתירה, מה שלא נמצא כן לכל עם ולשון, ולהם לא הראה כי אם פשוטי התורה, על כן לא יחפצו לקחתה”

He writes that all of Hashem’s good and treasures are stored and concealed inside the holy Torah. The key to unlocking those hidden treasures was given to Yisrael secretly by HKB”H; he instilled in their very beings additional “binah.” No other

people or nation possess this; they were only shown the simple, plain aspects of the Torah; hence, they opted not to accept it.

I would like to emphasize that this in no way contradicts the statement in the Midrash (V.R. 22, 1): "מקרא, משנה, הלכות, תלמוד, כולן נאמרו למשה תוספתות, אגדות, ואפילו מה שתלמיד ותיק עתיד לומר לפני רבו, כולן נאמרו למשה" —all the elements of Torah, even novel interpretations that were destined to be introduced in the future, were all said to Moshe at Sinai. HKB" H revealed to Moshe Rabeinu the entire Torah including hidden treasures that would only be revealed in the future. In reality, however, it is impossible to reveal any chiddush before its proper time has arrived. As the Chida writes in Dvash L'Fee: "האחרונים יכולים לחדש מה שלא יכלו לחדש" —the later sages are able to introduce original interpretations that the earlier sages were not able to introduce, because the time for that chiddush had not yet arrived.

The Two Berachos of the Torah Correspond to the Two Parts of the Torah

Based on the premise of the Chasam Sofer, we can explain beautifully the institution by our blessed sages to recite two distinct Berachos over the Torah. The first berachah is: "ברוך אתה ה' אלקינו מלך העולם אשר קדשנו במצוותיו וצונו לעסוק בדברי תורה" —**Blessed are You, Hashem, our G-d, King of the universe, Who sanctified us with His mitzvos and commanded us to engage in the study of Torah.** We attach a special tefilah to this berachah lauding the pleasing nature of Torah-study: "והערב נא ה' אלקינו את דברי תורתך בפינו ובפיות עמך בית ישראל, ונהיה אנחנו וצאצאינו וצאצאי צאצאינו וצאצאי עמך בית ישראל, כולנו יודעי שמך ולומדי." Please, Hashem, our G-d, sweeten the words of Your Torah in our mouths and in the mouths of Your people Yisrael. So that we, our descendants and the descendants of Your people, the house of Yisrael, all know Your name and study Your Torah for its own sake. **Blessed are You, Hashem, Who teaches Torah to His people, Yisrael.**

The "michaber" and the Rama (O.C. 47, 6) write that the words "הערב נא" must be recited with the addition of the initial letter "vav," rather than "הערב נא". Their sources are Rashi (Berachos 11b) and Tosafos (ibid. 46a), who assert that "והערב נא" is not a separate berachah; rather, it is a continuation of the first berachah. Thus, we have a single, long berachah that opens with "baruch" and concludes with "baruch."

The second berachah recited in association with Torah-study is: "ברוך אתה ה' אלקינו מלך העולם אשר בחר בנו מכל העמים ונתן לנו את תורתך ברוך אתה ה' נתת התורה" —**Blessed are You, Hashem, our G-d, King of the universe, Who chose us from all the nations and gave us His Torah. Blessed are You, Hashem, Giver of the Torah.** Regarding this berachah, the Gemara teaches (Berachos 11b): "אמר רב המנונא, זו היא מעולה שבברכות" —**Rav Hammuna said: This is the choicest of the Berachos.** Rashi comments: **This is the best of the Berachos of the Torah, since it includes an expression of gratitude to the Omnipresent and praise of the Torah and of Yisrael.** We will endeavor to explain why Chazal instituted the recitation of two Berachos in association with the mitzvah of Torah-study rather than just one berachah, as is the usual practice, and the special significance of the second berachah.

Additionally, we will explore why Chazal deemed it necessary to include in the formula of this choice berachah the statement: "Who chose us from all the nations and gave us His Torah." The commentaries are puzzled by this formula seeing as the Torah explicitly states (Devarim 33, 2): "ה' מסיני בא וזרח משעיר" —**Hashem came from Sinai and He shone forth to them from Seir; He appeared from Har Paran, and He came with some of the myriads of the holy; from His right hand, He presented a fire of law to them.** Rashi explains: **He presented it to the children of Eisav (who dwelled in Seir), so that they would have the opportunity to accept the Torah; but they did not want it. He also went to Har Paran and presented it there to the children of Yishmael, so that they would have the opportunity to accept it; but they did not want it.** So, it's not entirely accurate to proclaim: "Who chose us from all the nations and gave us His Torah." In reality, HKB" H initially offered the Torah to the descendants of Eisav and Yishmael, but they did not want it. He only gave the Torah to Yisrael after they refused it.

In light of the teaching of the Chasam Sofer, we can reconcile the matter. The first berachah: "אשר קדשנו במצוותיו וצונו לעסוק" —relates to the portion of the Torah HKB" H revealed to us at Har Sinai. Hence, we add the tefilah: "והערב נא ה' אלקינו את דברי תורתך בפינו" —that we should all succeed in learning Torah l'shema. The second berachah, however: "אשר בחר בנו מכל העמים ונתן לנו את תורתך" —relates to the portions of Torah not revealed to Yisrael at Sinai, but were concealed to be revealed by Yisrael in later generations with the additional "binah" ingrained in their nature.

This then is the significance of the formula: **“Who chose us from all the nations.”** Even had the other nations wanted to accept the Torah, they would not have been able to reveal the portions of the Torah that remained stored and concealed with HKB”H, because they lacked the additional “binah.” As the Chasam Sofer explained, this special gift was given exclusively to Yisrael. It is part of their nature, and is not found in the goyim. As a consequence, they only perceived the simple aspects of the Torah and turned it down.

This then is the implication of the continuation of the berachah: **“And He gave us His Torah.”** This refers specifically to the portion of the Torah that was not revealed at Har Sinai but remained stored with HKB”H. This prompted Rav Hamnuna’s statement: **“This is the choicest of the Berachos.”** And as Rashi explains: **This is the best of the Berachos of the Torah, since it includes an expression of gratitude to the Omnipresent and praise of the Torah and of Yisrael.** With this berachah, we express our gratitude to HKB”H for endowing us with the “binah yeteirah” that enables us to reveal the portions of the Torah that remained stored with Him. This is indeed special praise of the Torah and Yisrael.

This explains the conclusion of the berachah beautifully: **“ברוך אתה ה' נותן התורה—blessed are You, Hashem, Giver of the Torah.** The Taz (O.C. 47, 5) notes that the berachah employs the present tense “נותן” rather than the past tense “נתן:” עוד שתקנו לחתום 'נותן' התורה, שיש במשמעותו לשון הוה, ולא 'נתן' בלשון עבר, אלא הכוונה שהוא יתברך נותן לנו תמיד בכל יום תורתו, דהיינו שאנו עוסקים. This indicates that **the Blessed One gives us His Torah constantly, on a daily basis; that is, we study it, and He provides us with novel understandings.** In keeping with this discussion, this accords very nicely with the main point of this berachah: **“Who chose us from all the nations.”** For, as explained, this berachah thanks HKB”H for the “binah” He endows us with daily, which enables us to reveal portions of the Torah that remain stored with Him. Hence, we recite “נותן התורה” in the present tense, because this is an ongoing, daily process.

The Avos Dug Wells to Uncover Parts of the Torah Concealed in Nature

Following this illuminating path, we will now clarify HKB”H’s response to the nations of the world who were envious of Yisrael for having received the Torah. HKB”H said to them: **“Bring Me a ‘sefer yuchsin’ as My children bring.”** We will refer to parshas

Toldos. There we learn that the holy Avos were busy digging wells, as it is written (Bereishis 26, 18): **“וישב יצחק ויחפור את בארות המים אשר חפרו בימי אברהם אביו ויסתמום פלשתים אחרי מות אברהם... ויחפרו And Yitzchak returned and he dug the wells of water which they had dug in the days of Avraham his father and which the Pelishtim had stopped up after Avraham’s death . . . Yitzchak’s servants dug in the valley and found there a well of fresh water.**

The Sefas Emes (Toldos 5633) writes in the name of his elder, the esteemed author of the Chiddushei HaRim, zy”a: **“אדוני” אבי זקני מורי ורבי ז”ל הגיד בענין הבארות שחפרו אבותינו, להסיר החיצוניות The Avos dug wells to remove the external, earthly layers of creation, to unveil the hidden illumination concealed within nature. For, all things and places possess an internal aspect. To clarify his grandfather’s message, the Sefas Emes (ibid. 5647) refers to the beginning of creation, when the entire earth was covered with water, as it is written (ibid. 1, 2): “זרוח אלקים מרחפת על פני המים”—and the spirit of G-d hovered over the surface of the waters.** Subsequently, however, on the third day of creation, it states (ibid. 9): **“ויאמר G-d said, “Let the waters be gathered beneath the heavens into one area, and let the dry land appear.” And it was so.**

The Sefas Emes explains the significance of these events based on the following Midrash (B.R. 1, 1): **“התורה אומרת אני הייתי The Torah says: “I was HKB”H’s arSisan’s instrument (blueprint)” . . . HKB”H would look in the Torah and create the world.** Similarly, we learn in the Zohar hakadosh (Terumah 161a): **“זכאינו אינון כל אינון דמשדדלי באוריינתא, בגין דכד ברא קודשא בריה הוא עלמא, וזכאינו אינון כל אינון דמשדדלי באוריינתא, בגין דכד ברא קודשא בריה הוא עלמא.” All those who toil in the study of Torah are meritorious, because that is how HKB”H created the world; he looked in the Torah and created the world. This is the significance of the entire world being covered with water; it was impregnated and saturated with Torah, which is compared to water. As they teach us in the Gemara (Ta’anis 7a): **“ויאין מים—and there is no water other than Torah, as it says (Yeshayah 55, 1): ““Ho, everyone who is thirsty, go to the water.”** In other words, at the beginning of creation, the entire Torah was visible and revealed without any concealment. This is the implication of the passuk: **“And the spirit of G-d hovered over the surface of the waters.”****

Nevertheless, creation was set up such that the illumination of the Torah would be concealed within the material elements

of nature. This allowed mankind the freedom to choose between good and bad. Perforce, man would have to toil in the study of Torah to reveal the waters of Torah concealed in the physical, natural world. Therefore: **G-d said, "Let the waters be gathered beneath the heavens into one area, and let the dry land appear."** In other words, pockets of Torah (water) were concealed inside the earth, but only dry land was visible on the surface. Thus, the dust and soil of the material world conceal the spiritual waters lying beneath the surface until mankind comes and excavates the superficial layers to reveal the illumination of Torah concealed within—the well of life-sustaining water.

This then is the significance of the Avos's digging up the physical earth. They wished to reveal the **"באר מים חיים"—the well of life-sustaining water**—the divine light of Torah concealed within the depths of the earth. The Plishtim, however, representing the forces of impurity, filled them up with dirt, attempting to prevent the divine light from shining through. Ultimately, the Avos's efforts proved successful. They found a **"be'er mayim chaim"**—revealing the light of Hashem—and paved the way for all of Yisrael to continue to do so throughout all future generations. Every Jew possesses the ability to dig through the dust of materialism to uncover the **"be'er mayim chayim"** that HKB"H concealed in the depths of creation. This is the gist of the Sefas Emes's wonderful explanation.

At this point, it is worth noting that there is no contradiction between the idea of the Chasam Sofer and the idea of the Sefas Emes. The Chasam Sofer wrote that the portion of the Torah not revealed by HKB"H to Yisrael at Matan Torah **is still stored with the blessed Giver of the Torah.** Whereas the Sefas Emes asserts that a portion of the Torah with which the world was created is stored in the depths of the earth. After all, the presence of HKB"H fills the entire world to sustain it. We express this phenomenon several times a day as the song of the seraphim (Yeshayah 6, 3): **"קדוש קדוש קדוש ה' צבאות מלא כל הארץ כבודו"**—**holy, holy, holy is Hashem, Master of Legions; the whole world is filled with His glory.** Hence, in the kedushah of Mussaf on Shabbasos and festivals, we add the following: **"כבודו מלא עולם, משרתיו שואלים זה לזה איה מקום כבודו להעריצו"**—**His glory fills the world. His ministering angels ask one another, "Where is the place of His glory to worship Him?"** It turns out that the Torah that is stored and concealed in the depths of the earth is actually stored with Him, since His glory fills the entire world. Thus, the two ideas go hand in hand magnificently.

Torah Study Is a Magnet that Attracts the Concealed Portions of the Torah

As a loyal servant in the presence of his master, I would like to embellish the wonderful idea of the Sefas Emes. The digging tools used by the holy Avos to dig wells to reveal the **"be'er mayim chayim"**—the illumination of the Torah sequestered in the depths of the earth—are, in reality, the portions of the Torah HKB"H gave us at Har Sinai. By studying Torah, we are able to dig through the material, earthly aspects of the world to reveal the illumination of Torah concealed within. For, the Torah functions like a magnet drawing out the portions of the Torah stored and concealed within the earth and nature.

So, when the holy Avos dug wells of Torah, they utilized the portions of Torah that they were able to perceive even before they were actually given to Yisrael. As we have learned in the Gemara (Yoma 28b): **"מימיהן של אבותינו לא פרשה ישיבה מהם... אברהם אבינו זקן ויושב בישיבה היה, שנאמר ואברהם זקן בא בימים, יצחק אבינו זקן ויושב בישיבה היה, שנאמר ויהי כי זקן יצחק, יעקב אבינו זקן ויושב בישיבה, היה. שנאמר (שם מו-י) ועיני ישראל כבדו מזוקן."** **From the times of our forefathers, yeshivot were always present... Avraham Avinu was an elder sitting in a yeshivah, as it states (Bereishis 24, 1): "And Avraham was an elder, well on in years." Yitzchak Avinu was an elder sitting in a yeshivah, as it states (ibid. 27, 1): "It was when Yitzchak became an elder." Yaakov Avinu was an elder sitting in a yeshivah, as it states (ibid. 48, 10): "And the eyes of Yisrael were heavy from age."** [Translator's note: The term "elder" ("זקן") in these pesukim implies "one that has acquired wisdom" ("זה קנה").]

We can suggest that this understanding is implicit in the assertion of the Chasam Sofer. When HKB"H said to Yisrael, **כי לקח טוב נתתי לכם**, He was referring to the portions of the Torah, the precious merchandise, that He gave Yisrael at Har Sinai. He was telling them that in the merit of studying those portions of the Torah, **"תורת אל תעזבו"**—they would also merit receiving and revealing **"My Torah"**—the portions of the Torah that remain stored with Me. This is the lesson taught in the Mishnah (Avos 5, 22): **"הפוך כה והפוך כה דכולה בה"**—**delve into (turn) it over and over again, for it contains everything.** They were alluding to the way Torah is meant to be studied, analogous to plowing the earth; it needs to be turned over repeatedly to uncover the illumination of the Torah concealed within the earthly aspects of our existence.

It is with great delight that we can now shed some light on Rabbi Yochanan's statement: **HKB"H only bestows chochmah upon one who possesses chochmah, as it states** (Daniel 2, 21): **"He gives wisdom to the wise."** In keeping with what we have just learned, Rabbi Yochanan is referring to the chochmah of the Torah that remained in safekeeping with HKB"H until the appropriate time for it to be revealed. In other words, HKB"H only relinquishes that chochmah to **"one who possesses chochmah"**—to someone who has studied and obtained the chochmah of the Torah that he gave us at Har Sinai.

With this understanding, we can better appreciate the message of the Midrash: **The nations of the world were envious of Yisrael when they received the Torah. They protested: "Why are they more deserving than any of the other nations?"** The nations of the world did not know that the reason the Torah was given to Yisrael was so that Yisrael would be able to access and reveal the portions of the Torah that remained in safekeeping with HKB"H. This prompted the above inquiry. However, HKB"H silenced them by asking them to produce their "sefer yuchsin"—a genealogy that would justify their claim—as Yisrael are able to do.

In this manner, HKB"H hinted to them that the purpose of receiving the Torah is to uncover the portions of the Torah stored in the depths of the earth. Only Yisrael are capable of doing this, because of their physical and spiritual ancestry and relationship with the holy Avos. They dug wells in this world to reveal the life-sustaining waters of the Torah concealed within the earth. Thus, they paved the way for all Jews to follow their example and expose the waters of Torah concealed inside the earth through their Torah-study. The nations of the world, however, who have no connection with the holy Avos, are incapable of uncovering the hidden wells of Torah. Therefore, giving them the Torah would have served no purpose.

It is with immense pleasure that we can apply this understanding to interpret a teaching in the Gemara (Shabbas 88a), where they expound on the passuk related to Matan Torah (Shemos 19, 17): **ויוצא משה את העם לקראת האלקים מן המחנה** ויתייצבו בתחתית ההר, אמר רבי אבדימי בר חמא בר חסא, מלמד שכפה הקב"ה עליהם את ההר כגיגית, ואמר להם אם אתם מקבלים התורה מוטב, ואם לאו שם. **"Moshe brought the people forth from the camp toward G-d, and they stood under the mountain."** **Rav Avdimi bar Chama bar Chasa said: This teaches that HKB"H held the mountain over them like an upturned barrel. Then He said to them: "If you accept the Torah, fine; but if not, your burial will be there."** Tosafos pose an obvious question (ibid.): Why was it necessary to coerce Yisrael to accept the Torah in this threatening manner? Hadn't they already accepted the Torah willingly by proclaiming enthusiastically (ibid. 24, 7) **"na'aseh v'nishma"**—**we will do and we will hear?!**

Based on our current discussion, we can reconcile this difficulty very nicely and logically. Indeed, Yisrael accepted the Torah willingly; however, they only accepted the portion of the Torah that HKB"H gave them there at Har Sinai. We learned, however, from the Chasam Sofer that it is still incumbent upon Yisrael to uncover the portions of the Torah stored with HKB"H that have yet to be revealed. It is with regards to these portions of the Torah that HKB"H held the mountain menacingly over the heads of Yisrael and said to them, **"If you accept the Torah, all is well and good."** For, it was specifically for this purpose that HKB"H gave us the Torah—to also reveal the portions of the Torah He kept concealed with Him for safekeeping. When we complete this glorious task, we will merit the complete geulah, swiftly, in our times! Amen.

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