

Good Shabbos Everyone. This week we begin Sefer Bamidbar with the words "And Hashem spoke to Moshe in the Midbar (wilderness) of Sinai." (Bamidbar 1:1) What is the significance of stating that the Torah was given in the wilderness? The essence of a wilderness is a barren place where resources and luxuries are severely limited. The Ksav Sofer writes that from here we see a principle: Those who are willing to give up on the luxuries of life, being satisfied with less, will merit receiving the Torah. (As quoted by Rabbi Yisroel Ciner) The following story illustrates this idea.

Rav Kahaneman was originally the Rav in Ponovezh, Lithuania. During the war, he wanted to save his family from the impending danger and made arrangements for them to leave the country. Tragically, they were not able to get out in time. He lost everything, but was determined to rebuild in Eretz Yisroel.

At the time, it was World War II and the Germans were approaching Eretz Yisroel from North Africa. Rav Kahaneman then sought to buy a certain plot of land to build a new yeshiva. When people tried to discourage the Rav buying the land, due the impending danger the Rav answered them: "Am-Yisroel needs a yeshiva, even if it is only for ten days!" Borch Hashem, the danger (of the Germans) passed and the yeshiva grew and grew.

Through an amazing twist of divine intervention, Rav Kahaneman came to have know a certain Jew Max Rosenberg from Teaneck, New Jersey. Mr. Rosenberg, who was a prominent member of the community and a successful lawyer, suffered a heart attack one day. His doctors told him that it was time to take it easy, and suggested that he retire and move to Florida. Max refused. He kept on working until a year later, when he was diagnosed with a malignant tumor.

This time the doctors prescribed treatment, and, Boruch Hashem, Max was healed. Nevertheless, he needed no more convincing; he retired and moved down to Florida even though he was still nearly 15 years away from the time he had originally planned to retire. As a means of supporting himself, he bought an annuity that was to pay him until he was 90 years old. He figured that he would be gone long before the annuity ran out. He could not have been more wrong....

The Ponovezher Rav first met Max when he was in his 80's. The Rav would come down to Florida for a period of around three months in the winter to raise money for the yeshiva. The first time they met, Max gave him \$5,000. The Rav was impressed with Max, who was a smart man and a sincere Jew.

A year later, he Rav went to Max again, and once more Max gave him \$5,000. This pattern continued for the next few years. But finally, during one visit, the Rav was told by his driver, Reb Berel, that since Max ad turned 90, his annuity had ended. He had no more money give the yeshiva. In fact, Reb Berel said, Max may be short of cash even for his own needs. The Rav said that he wanted to visit Max anyway; Reb Berel was concerned that maybe Max would be embarrassed that he was unable to donate, but the Rav prevailed.

They arrived at Max's home and rang the doorbell. Max answered the door. The look on his face said it all. He knew he could not give the Rav the check for which he had come. They sat down to have some coffee and cake as Max explained the situation: that the annuity he had purchased had now expired, and he did not have enough to give anymore. The Rav thanked him for all the support he had given the yeshiva over the past years, and said that now it was time for the yeshiva to pay him back.

"From now on, every single month, the yeshiva is going to send you money in the amount of your annuity check!"

Max's face lit up. He thanked the Rav, but politely refused. Nevertheless, the Rav did not listen to his refusals. And so it was! Every single month, for the next seven years, the yeshiva sent Max a check. It may have been the first time a yeshiva supported its supporters, instead of vice versa. This is the way Max was able to live for the rest of his life. And what do you know? A few months after Max passed away, the yeshiva received a letter from the lawyer handling his estate. He had no children and he left his mansion on Pine Tree Drive to the yeshiva! (A Touch of Warmth, P. 104, Reb Yechiel Spero) **Good Shabbos Everyone.**

A Refuah Shleimah to Shusha Malka bas Golda

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