**Miller’s Musings** **פרשת**בְּמִדְבַּר

The appearance of a mass of twenty two myriad angels must have added tremendously to the awesome sight that the Jewish people beheld when witnessing G-d’s revelation at Sinai.  Curiously, the one aspect that the Jewish people picked up on, was the fact that these celestial beings carried flags, and so desired for themselves to also bear such flags. As we are told by the Medrash to this Parsha, G-d acquiesced to this yearning and bestowed upon the Jewish people flags to be utilised during their encampment in the wilderness.  Let us try to understand from where this desire for flags came, why Hashem was so willing to accede and perhaps learn a profound idea about ourselves as a people.

When a person covets something that truly does not stem from a logical motivation, it may be that it is in fact the person’s very soul that is reaching out for this focus of one’s attention.  The soul of a person originates from under the throne of the Al-mighty, and only truly longs for spiritual sustenance, were it not for the confusing desires for the physical engendered by it being confined within an animalistic body.  Just as a Princess raised amongst the splendour of a royal environment, can never be truly satiated by the efforts of a common man, no matter how much he may try to please her, so too the soul always longs for more than only physical satisfaction, regardless of the amount of bodily pleasure experienced.  The souls of the Jewish people may not have fully fathomed the worth of these flags, but they felt keenly their spiritual worth and so craved their presence in their lives, something G-d was only too happy to grant.

Humans have always sought a purpose to strive for in this world. Throughout history, whenever a new doctrine, a fresh societal system, or a novel ‘ism’ has reared its head, more often than not one of the driving forces behind the approach would be a Jew.  The soul within us yearns for meaning and for a cause to fight for.  The true goal we should be working towards is of course that given to us by G-d.  But when we lose our way, or deem that path incompatible with the way we prefer to live, we look for something else to take its place, no matter how futile, inconsequential or indeed destructive that aspiration may be. As Victor Frankl put it “man’s main concern is not to gain pleasure or to avoid pain but rather to see a meaning in his life”.  Meaning is not something we would like, but something we need.  The only question is in which direction we focus that need, towards empty ambitions or towards the true reason for our existence.

May this week's Shabbos provide meaning and depth to our lives.

לעילוי נשמת לאה בת אברהם