

PARSHAT BAMIDBAR
NUMBERS 1:1-4:20
HAFTARAH HOSEA 2:1-22
2 SIVAN 5785/29 MAY 2025



Still Life with Apples
Oil on canvass by Paul Cézanne

BANNERS OF LOVE

1. Each of the children of Israel shall camp with his flag (*diglo*), under the banner of their ancestral house... (Number 2:2)
2. When God revealed Godself on Mount Sinai, twenty-two thousand angels descended with God and they were all arrayed under separate flags (*degalim degalim*), as it is said, “Made preeminent by flags (*daglu*)” (Song of Songs 5:10). When Israel saw them arrayed under distinguishing flags, they began to long for flags and said, “O, that we also could be arranged under flags like them!” Said the Holy Blessed One, “How eager you are to be arranged under flags. I shall fulfill your desire!” God immediately informed Israel by telling Moses, “Go arrange them under flags (*degalim*) as they have desired.” Therefore it is said, “He brought me into the house of wine, and his flag (*diglo*) of love is over me” (Song of Songs 2:4). (Bamidbar Rabbah 2:3)
3. “And Adonai spoke to Moses in the wilderness of Sinai” (Numbers 1:1). Why in the wilderness of Sinai? Anyone who does not throw himself open to all [*hefker*, ownerless, not possessed] like a wilderness cannot acquire wisdom and Torah. (Bamidbar 1:70)

4. People are accustomed to look at the heavens and to wonder what happens there. It would be better if they would look within themselves, to see that happens there. (Menachem Mendel of Kotz)

5. I will betroth you to Me forever; I will betroth you to Me in righteousness and justice, in steadfast love and compassion. I will betroth you to Me in faithfulness, and you shall know (יהוה) Yud Hei Vav Hei. (Hosea 2:21-22, haftarah for Parshat Bamidbar)