



1. Shemot 19:1-2

In the third month since the Children of Israel left the land of Egypt, on this day they arrived at Midbar Sinai. And they travelled from Rephidim and they arrived at Midbar Sinai, and they camped in the midbar. And Israel camped there, facing the mountain.

Approach 1: They camped twice

2. Rabbeinu Bechaye, Commentary to 19:2

"ויבאו מדבר סיני ויהנו שם" בו ביום וביום השני נעתקו וחנו כנגד ההר שנאמר...

"And they came to Midbar Sinai and they camped there" on that day, and on the second day they moved and camped facing the mountain, as it says...

3. Shemot 17:6, 33:6

I will stand before you there, upon the stone at Horeb, and you will strike the stone, and water will emerge from it... And the Jews removed their crowns from Mount Horeb. (and see Devarim 1:2, 1:6, 1:15, 5:2, etc.)

Approach 2: There were two camps

4. Rabbi Avraham Ibn Ezra, Commentary to Shemot 19:2

ראשי המטות והזקנים חנו נגד ההר בעבור כבודם, על כן הזכיר 'ויהן' כי מועטים היו, כי כפי מעלתם עמדו ביום מתן תורה סביב הר סיני כאשר אפשר  
The heads of tribes and the elders camped facing the mountain for their honour. Therefore it said "And he camped," for there were few of them. For due to their greatness they stood around Mount Sinai when the Torah was given, as I will explain.

5. Ramban, Commentary to Shemot 19:1

ויתכן שהבדילו מתוכם כל האספסוף אשר בקרבם, וחנו בני ישראל לבדם לפני ההר, וערב רב אחריהם, כי לישראל יתן התורה, כמו שאמר (יט:ג) "כה תאמר לבית יעקב ותגיד לבני ישראל." וזה טעם "ויהן שם ישראל." או הוא להזכירם דרך כבוד בקבלם התורה:

And perhaps they separated from among themselves all of the joiners who were in their midst, and the Children of Israel alone camped before the mountain and the *erev rav* behind them, for the Torah would be given to the Jews, as 19:3 says, "So shall you say to the House of Jacob, and you shall declare to the Children of Israel." And this is why "And Israel camped there." Or this is to mention them with honour as they received the Torah.

Approach 3: Two acts of Emunah

6. Shemot 14:11-12, 16:2

And they said to Moshe: Are there no graves in Egypt, that you took us to die in the midbar? What have you done to us, taking us from Egypt? Is this not what we said to you in Egypt, saying, "Leave us and we will serve Egypt, for it would be better for us to serve Egypt than to die in the midbar."

And the entire community of the Children of Israel complained against Moshe and against Aharon in the midbar.

7. Ramban to Shemot 16:2

וזה טעם "וילונו על משה ועל אהרן במדבר," כי תלונתם מפני המדבר.

And this is why "They complained against Moshe and against Aharon in the midbar," for their complaint was because of the midbar.

8. Rabbi Yaakov Zvi Mecklenburg, HaKtav v'haKabbalah to Shemot 19:2

מנהג המחנות כשחוננים לעשות פני אהליהם ופתחיהם אל העמק, כי ההר יפסיק הראות, לכן יתנו פתחי אהליהם אל הצד שאינו מפסיק הראות ואחוריהם אל ההר, אמנם ישראל שידעו שההר הוא הר אלקי ומשם יקבלו התורה, עשו פני אהליהם נגד ההר, (רא"ש).

The custom of camps when they camp is to place the face and entrance of their tents to the valley, for the mountain blocks their view. Therefore they put the entrances of their tents to a side which does not obstruct their view, and their

back to the mountain. But Israel, knowing that this was the mountain of Gd and there they would receive the Torah, put the face of their tents to the mountain. (Rosh)

### Summary

They camped twice

- Two days (Rabbeinu Bechaye)
- For water and then for Torah (Malbim)

There were two groups

- General Jews and Leaders (Ibn Ezra)
- Erev Rav and Jews (Ramban)

They displayed Emunah in two ways – Midbar and Facing the mountain