

# ב"ה Torah Tidbits

ISSUE 1661

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ישראל

מ' סיוון תשפ"ו - MAY 22<sup>ND</sup> 2026

SHAVUOT - NASO  
שבועות - נשא

AVOT 1

## "Two Very Different Texts"

Rabbi Dr. Tzvi Hersh Weinreb  
Page 20



## Opening the Door to the Light of the Aleph-Bet

Shoshana Judelman Page 80



OU Israel  
wishes you  
and your family  
Chag Sameach!



נעשה ונשמע שמות כ"ד:ז'

**YERUSHALAYIM ZMANIM: SHAVUOT: CANDLES 6:57 PM**  
**NASO: CANDLES 6:58 PM • HAVDALA 8:16 PM • RABBEINU TAM 8:51 PM**



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## A SHORT VORT

BY RABBI CHANOCH YERES  
RAV, BEIT KNESSET BEIT YISRAEL, YEMIN MOSHE

"And Israel encamped before the mount." - (19:2) - ויחן שם ישראל נגד ההר (יטב).

Why does the pasuk use the word "Vayichan" in the singular form when referring to the group of Israel?


Rashi explains that at this moment the Israelites achieved a level of total unity as one. "As **one person**" refers to one unit, "**with one heart**" signifying one goal.


However, Rashi uses almost the same phrase describing the Egyptians chasing (Nasa-in the singular) the Israelites into the Yam Suf but in the reversed order. "**With one heart**" "**as one person**". Is this an insignificant change on the part of Rashi?


Rabbi Yosef Fulstein offers an insight into the comprehensive explanation of Rashi. There is a major difference between the Egyptians attitude and the Israelites. The Egyptians were rallied together in their animosity towards the Israelites. It was their "lev echad", their passion of hatred that forged them together as "ish echad" yet only lasted for that fleeting moment. However, at the base of Mount Sinai, we first attained a long-lasting unity as a people "k'ish echad", which generated the ensuing all-inclusive feeling for one another with common purpose and objective "b'lev echad". This everlasting purpose adopted as a nation was the precondition for receiving the Torah.


- Shabbat Shalom

## SHAVUOT REMINDERS

 Eruv Tavshilin is prepared on Thursday May 21 before Yom Tov.

 Yizkor is recited on Shavuot. (Light a Yizkor candle before Yom Tov).

 Light an extended candle before Yom Tov in order to light candles Friday night for Shabbat.

 The Book of Rut is read on the morning of Shavuot

# CANDLE LIGHTING AND HAVDALA TIMES



## OTHER Z'MANIM



### JERUSALEM

Ranges 11 days Wednesday - Shabbat  
May 20 - 30 | 4 - 14 Iyar

Earliest Tallit and Tefillin	<b>4:37-4:31</b>
Sunrise	<b>5:35-5:31</b>
Sof Zman Kriat Shema Magen Avraham	<b>9:05-9:03</b> <b>8:22-8:19</b>
Sof Zman Tefila (According to the Gra and Baal HaTanaya)	<b>10:15-10:14</b>
Chatzot (Halachic Noon)	<b>12:34-12:35</b>
Mincha Gedola (Earliest Mincha)	<b>1:09-1:11</b>
Plag Mincha	<b>6:06-6:11</b>
Sunset (Including Elevation)	<b>7:38-7:44</b>



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	SHAVUOT		NASO		BEHA'ALOTCHA	
	Candles	Candles*	Havdala	Candles	Early	Havdala
Yerushalayim/Maale Adumim	<b>6:57</b>	<b>6:58</b>	<b>8:16</b>	7:02	6:10	8:21
Aza Area (Netivot, Sderot et al)	<b>7:14</b>	<b>7:15</b>	<b>8:17</b>	7:19	6:12	8:22
Beit Shemesh/RBS	<b>7:16</b>	<b>7:17</b>	<b>8:16</b>	7:21	6:11	8:21
Gush Etzion	<b>7:13</b>	<b>7:13</b>	<b>8:16</b>	7:18	6:10	8:21
Raanana/Tel Mond/Herzliya/K.Saba	<b>7:15</b>	<b>7:15</b>	<b>8:18</b>	7:20	6:12	8:23
Modiin/Chashmonaim	<b>7:14</b>	<b>7:14</b>	<b>8:17</b>	7:19	6:11	8:22
Netanya	<b>7:15</b>	<b>7:16</b>	<b>8:19</b>	7:20	6:13	8:24
Be'er Sheva	<b>7:13</b>	<b>7:14</b>	<b>8:16</b>	7:18	6:11	8:21
Rehovot	<b>7:14</b>	<b>7:15</b>	<b>8:18</b>	7:19	6:12	8:23
Petach Tikva	<b>6:57</b>	<b>6:58</b>	<b>8:18</b>	7:02	6:12	8:23
Ginot Shomron	<b>7:14</b>	<b>7:14</b>	<b>8:17</b>	7:19	6:11	8:22
Haifa / Zichron	<b>7:06</b>	<b>7:06</b>	<b>8:20</b>	7:11	6:13	8:25
Gush Shiloh	<b>7:13</b>	<b>7:13</b>	<b>8:16</b>	7:18	6:10	8:21
Tel Aviv / Givat Shmuel	<b>7:15</b>	<b>7:15</b>	<b>8:18</b>	7:20	6:12	8:23
Givat Zeev	<b>7:17</b>	<b>7:18</b>	<b>8:16</b>	7:22	6:10	8:21
Chevron / Kiryat Arba	<b>7:12</b>	<b>7:13</b>	<b>8:15</b>	7:17	6:10	8:20
Ashkelon	<b>7:15</b>	<b>7:15</b>	<b>8:18</b>	7:20	6:13	8:23
Yad Binyamin	<b>7:14</b>	<b>7:15</b>	<b>8:17</b>	7:19	6:12	8:22
Tzfat / Bikat HaYarden	<b>7:08</b>	<b>7:09</b>	<b>8:18</b>	7:14	6:11	8:23
Golan	<b>7:13</b>	<b>7:14</b>	<b>8:17</b>	7:18	6:10	8:22
Nahariya/Maalot	<b>7:05</b>	<b>7:06</b>	<b>8:20</b>	7:10	6:13	8:25
Afula	<b>7:14</b>	<b>7:15</b>	<b>8:18</b>	7:19	6:11	8:23

Rabbeinu Tam (Jerusalem): Naso - 8:51 PM • Beha'alotcha - 8:56 PM

All Times According to MyZmanim (20 mins before Sunset in most Cities; 40 mins in Yerushalyim and Petach Tikva; 30 mins in Tzfat, Nahariya, Maalot and Haifa)

\* Candles for Naso should be lit from a preexisting flame

Daf Yomi Shavuot: Chulin 21



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## DEAR TORAH TIDBITS FAMILY

RABBI AVI BERMAN  
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR, OU ISRAEL  
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I was recently talking to one of my staff members who is deciding where to send his son for high school next year. He told me that there were just too many options to choose from. Should it be a dormitory or a day school? A program with a better kodesh department or a stronger chol program? One with more of an emphasis on volunteering, outdoor education, or something else? He is an oleh from a city in North America where they didn't have much of a choice for schools. "Look at the bright side," I said to him. "Back in America, you had maybe two options for schooling. Here in Israel, with so many choices, you have the ability to choose a program that suits your child best."

This reality touches on a principle I come

back to again and again. I've brought it up to my wife and children, to NCSYers, and to my colleagues. Chazal teach us, "Ein adam lomed ela bemakom shelibo chafetz," which means a person only truly learns in a place where his heart desires (Avodah Zarah 19a). When you pair that with the pasuk in Mishlei (22:6), "Chanoch lana'ar al pi darko," or educate a child according to his own way, we see something so powerful. Our goal is to guide each Jewish child along the path that is mat'im, or fitting, for them.

Having nine children and five grandchildren, baruch Hashem, I have a lot of personal experience in this area. We all know there are different kinds of children out there. Some are wired to sit and learn for hours on end. Others come alive through sports, volunteering, agriculture, hiking, or woodworking. Each child is profoundly different and no single framework can serve them all.

That same understanding shapes the work my team and I do here at OU Israel. People often ask me what programs we have for teenagers, college students, families, or retirees. I respond by telling them that no single program will work for everyone. We try to constantly develop programming that reaches the widest possible variety of participants by meeting people where they are.

I must say, I am continually amazed by what my team produces. We have programming for lone soldiers who might otherwise fall through the cracks. We have support networks for olim building their lives in Israel. NCSY runs diverse programming for

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from this issue of TT  
be in loving memory of and לע"נ  
our dear parents  
whose 13th and 33rd yahrzeits  
are observed in Sivan**

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**Deeply missed by  
their children, grandchildren  
and great grandchildren**

***The Cherrick & Saslow Families***

teenagers across the country, as well as teen centers around the country for those at risk. We serve families with special needs members. We offer adult learning in shuls nationwide, run Shabbatonim, and so much more.

Each program is designed to meet a specific need and a specific heart's desire.

All of this brings me to a deep connection with Shavuot. Consider the OU Semichat Chaver program run by Rav Elyada Goldwicht. It really created a new niche of halacha learning centers in well over 200 locations around the world. All these groups study the same halachot together and earn a Semichat Chaver certificate upon completion. I am looking forward to a special gathering they are holding in the coming weeks in Yerushalayim to celebrate the limud Torah taking place through this program.

Between the Semichat Chaver program and the special Semichat Chaver booklet being distributed with Torah Tidbits this week (which is also available by email) for parents to learn with their children using beautifully illustrated comics, we are striving to give every Jew an opportunity to connect with Torah in a way that speaks to them. Some of our programs lean more toward Torah study, others toward the social or the spiritual, and still others toward volunteering or tiyulim. The variety is intentional because every heart desires something different.

And that is exactly what Shavuot is all about. On the night of Shavuot, no matter what corner of the Jewish world a person comes from, there is a shared awareness that we try to add a little more Torah to our lives. Whether someone stays up the entire



night and davens at sunrise or attends a shiur before heading to bed, the concept is the same. We receive the Torah anew, each

**May the Torah learned  
from this issue of Torah Tidbits  
Be in loving memory of  
and לעלוי נשמת**

**Rabbi David Rebibo z"l**  
**הרב דוד יעיש בן יוסף ואסתר ז"ל**  
**On his second Yahrzeit - י סין '**

**Deeply missed by his wife,  
children, grandchildren,  
Great-grandchildren  
and great-great-grandchildren**

*The Rebibo Family*

person in his or her own unique way.

I want to be transparent with my readers about something. As the head of OU Israel, I am closely in touch with our supporters, friends, and communities across Israel and the Jewish world. I must share that it is getting harder and harder to sustain these programs. Whether it is our teen programs serving young people who truly have no one else looking out for them or initiatives helping olim build community, the financial pressure is real.

Many people assume the OU is a very wealthy organization, and in one sense that is true. Baruch Hashem, the OU earns revenue from its kashrut supervision of over 1.5 million products worldwide. However, the OU has grown into what I often describe as an octopus with about 25 different legs. The kashrut income can sustain about four or five of those legs. It covers salaries and overhead, but to actually run programs, we rely on generous Jews from Israel and around the world.

Right now, the declining dollar is hitting hard. As the dollar has dropped significantly against the shekel, the value of donations from our brothers and sisters in North America has decreased substantially. That means we must turn more and more to our friends right here in Israel. I know that many Israelis living on pensions or salaries originating in the United States are feeling the pinch as well. We are very aware of this reality.

Nevertheless, I am personally asking each and every one of my readers a favor. As you prepare for Shavuot, where we ask HaKadosh

Baruch Hu to help us receive the Torah in the purest and most beautiful way, please take a moment to consider how you might help us continue this work. Think about what it costs on a weekly basis to print Torah Tidbits, to distribute it to communities across the country, and to provide programming for all ages and types.

No donation is too small and none is too large. Every single contribution means the world to us. I personally see every donation that comes in and I am deeply grateful. Feel free to include a note telling us which program you would like to support or simply make a general donation to sustain all of our work.

For some of us, it is easier to sit and learn Torah all day. For others, it is easier to write a check. There is a beautiful concept of Yissachar and Zevulun, where those who learn Torah and those who support Torah work in an amazing partnership. Even if you are not someone who learns Torah yourself, this is your opportunity to be a part of it. If you have not yet made aliyah but want to support those who have, this is your chance. If you cannot attend shiurim yourself but want to ensure that others can, this is the moment.

I generally try to use this platform to share what is happening in our world rather than to solicit support. But the truth is, so much of what is happening in our world right now revolves around making sure we can keep our existing programs thriving and continue to expand them. We can only continue that with your support and friendship.

Wishing you all an uplifting and inspiring Shabbat and a Chag Sameach,

  
Rabbi Avi Berman

Executive Director, OU Israel

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# OU... BEYOND KASHRUT

## Never Alone-Supporting Our Soldiers

OU Israel announced the launch of Frontline Support, an innovative new program to support English-speaking IDF soldiers in their spiritual and personal journey throughout army service. Utilizing a network of religious mentors with military experience and backgrounds, Frontline Support is designed to help soldiers find meaning, community and address challenges with religious identity and practice amidst army service.

The program recently celebrated its official launch in Jerusalem with over 40 IDF soldiers who met with mentors, under the direction of Rabbi Ian Schwartz, an active veteran who spoke on the importance of having a non-judgmental space during moments of uncertainty. Attendees also heard inspirational Torah from Rav Judah Mischel, Executive Director of HASC, as well as from author Gabi Katz, a former Lone Soldier injured in battle in Lebanon, who shared his perspective on spiritual support as a core element of resilience.

Amidst the current war and its lasting impacts, OU Israel increasingly recognized the need for a dedicated program that would provide support to English-speaking soldiers outside of the traditional Hesder or Yeshiva frameworks & all backgrounds and levels of observance are welcomed. OU Israel is proud to offer this supportive role through the lens of Torah, community, and connection to ensure that no soldier has to face the challenges of their service alone.



**Each week, we share one OU Israel initiative empowering lives and communities in our homeland, supporting English-speaking *olim* in their *klita* and supporting Israel's most vulnerable teens to rebuild trust, confidence, and a future.**



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# ALIYA-BY-ALIYA SEDRA SUMMARY

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SHAVUOT

The Torah reading for Shavuot (Shemot 19:1-20:23) is the story of the giving of the Torah at Mt. Sinai. It describes the prelude to the giving of the Torah, the preparation for it and then the 10 Commandments.

There is a tradition to read the 10 Commandments with what is known as “taamei elyon”, literally, the higher set of notes. There are 2 sets of trop or how to read these verses. One version divides the verses as we have them in our Chumash. The second, the taamei elyon, does not divide by verses but by paragraphs. For example, the first 6 verses are combined into one long verse. Similarly, the 3 verses of the commandment of Shabbat are combined into one long verse. The motivation for doing this seems to be to want to read these as 10 Dibrot – utterances. Not to emphasize the cognitive meaning of the verses but

the experience.

And that is really an expression of the meaning of Shavuot. The Torah is filled with mitzvot. It is not the content of the 10 Commandments that is significant. It is the drama of G-d speaking to man. The Divine communicating with the finite. That is a cosmic moment, an incredible moment, a unique moment in history. It is G-d descending, summoning us to Him, and communicating directly with man. Amidst fire, smoke, thunder and lightning, the mountain shaking. It is a sublime moment. A moment of intimacy, of desire of G-d for mankind, of the touch of heaven and earth.

We reflect this theme of intimacy, of uniqueness, of experience in 3 ways. One is by reading Akdamot before the Torah reading, which essentially is an expression in poetry of this sublime moment. And secondly, by standing for the Torah reading, which is a way of perhaps emphasizing the experience rather than the content of this moment. And third, by using this unique trop, the taamei elyon, dividing the reading into utterances, phrases, as if we are hearing the 10 Dibrot, the 10 utterances as they heard at Sinai.

This emphasis on the experience of Sinai motivates the choice of the Haftarah, the first chapter of the book of Ezekiel. This chapter is known as Maaseh Merkava, the vision of the chariot. It is a description of the angels and the Divine, full of metaphoric perception of G-d. This is chosen to parallel the Torah reading, emphasizing the sublime, mysterious, awesome experience of Sinai. ■

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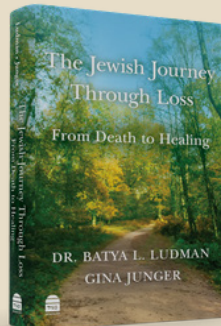
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## ALIYA-BY-ALIYA SEDRA SUMMARY

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### PARSHAT NASO

While the book of Vayikra was the book of Holiness, the book of Bamidbar is the book of the national march to the Land.

They share the notion of aspiration. In Vayikra the aspiration was for Holiness, the reach beyond, the reach for the Divine. In Bamidbar, the aspiration is the Land of Israel, the march to the Land, the national aspiration to build our Jewish society in our Land.

And they share aspirations delayed, aspirations marred.

In Vayikra, the reach for the Divine, the entry to the Mikdash, was marred by Tuma. One who is Tamei, impure, needed to remove the Tuma to enter the Mikdash. A setback, but a setback that is resolved through purification. In all the aspects of Kedusha of the book of Vayikra, Kedusha being aspiration for the beyond, the setbacks have solutions, are resolvable.

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And in our book of Bamidbar, the national march to the Land, the aspirational march is introduced with structure, with functions, with a census. The order of the impending march. But the aspirations are marred by the spies, by conflicts of Korach, of the failures of the chase of the Midianite women.

But these, the aspiration for Holiness and the aspiration of the Land are two entirely different processes. Holiness, its setbacks and its resolutions, is an oscillating process. Circular. We pursue Holiness, achieve it, fall back and then regain purity. The pursuit of G-d and of Holiness is an oscillating one, moving forward, moving backward and regaining forward. The Holiness of time of the holidays is oscillating, repeating year after year. Holiness is achieved, lost and regained. That is the pattern of religious life.

History and its aspiration are an entirely different process. It does not oscillate. It moves in a linear motion. History aspires, interrupts, redirects. History is constantly changing. While man in his religious life oscillates, history moves linearly, never returning, ever changing. It is not circular, it is linear.

So, while Tuma prevents entry to the Mikdash, it has a process to remove it and allow entry. That is a circular process, returning to where we began.

The march to the Land of Israel is man in history. History never returns to where it began. History marches forward. The spies interrupt the march and while the march will continue, it is not with those people but with an entirely different group.

The Jew lives a life of oscillation, a religious life of aspiration. The Nation lives a linear life, where failures and disappointments disrupt the march, never to be regained quite the same, with the line redirected.

Jewish history of the exile was the private religious life of oscillation, the life of Vayikra, a circular life of the pursuit of Holiness. We, the privileged generation of redemption, we are living Jewish life of Bamidbar, where National Jewish history moves forward, where the aspiration of order is marred and disrupted, but where we move in a linear fashion, ever forward, albeit in different directions.

We, the privileged Jews of redemption cannot view Jewish life only through the lens of Vayikra, as the same oscillating pursuit of Holiness with disregard for history for then we fail to grasp the monumental shift that is the book of Bamidbar, the pivot from Holiness to history, from oscillation to the linear reality of the march of history.



#### 1ST ALIYA (BAMIDBAR 4:21-37)

A census of the family of **Gershon** (son of Levi) is done. The family of Gershon is responsible for transporting the textiles of the Mishkan: the curtains and the covers of the Mishkan. They are to function under the supervision of Aharon and his sons; in their case, under Itamar. The census of the family of **Merari** is taken. Their responsibility is the structure of the Mishkan: boards, sockets, wall braces. Their tasks are assigned by name, supervised by Itamar. The census, aged 30 – 50, of the family of Kehat is 2, 750.

The three family units of Levi have special jobs in transporting the Mishkan. Kehat takes care of the holy vessels. Gershon is responsible for the textiles; the curtains and covers. And Merari transports the building; the walls and their supports.

The book of Bamidbar is the march to the Land of Israel. The latter half of Shemot contained the building of the Mishkan. The book of Vayikra described what will happen in the Mishkan including the role of the kohanim in the service in the Mishkan.

Now in Bamidbar we are ready to travel to the Land. We switch from describing it, to doing it. This portable sanctuary, well, has to be transported. How will we do that? That is the job of the Leviim.

This description of jobs is a crucial piece of the march to the Land. Everyone has their role to play. Kohanim have a holy role. Leviim have the role of support of the holy. The leaders of the tribes do the census. And bring offerings for the inauguration of the Mishkan. The census is necessary to plan for those who will serve in the military.

Said differently, we have focused in the Torah up until here on the engagement of man with his G-d. Now we focus on man and his people. And in particular, serving his people.

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While the theme of the book of Bamidbar is the march to the Land, it is not an historical book, a descriptive book. It is also a prescriptive book. We as individuals take our place as part of our national destiny. With different roles.

In our time, with the return to the Land of Israel, we have again become familiar with this duality, of personal service to G-d and of service to our people. That notion of serving our people is not an invention of modern Zionism; it is the theme of an entire book of our Torah.



### 2ND ALIYA (4:38-49)

The census of Gershon, 2, 630, and Merari, 3, 200. The total of those who will serve and carry the Mishkan is 8, 580.

In this brief aliya, the census of the Leviim is completed. But in the Leviim's census, the number is accompanied by the phrase "and their task". Because it isn't the numbers that are important, but the number of people available for these tasks. It is people being prepared to assume their roles in this national project of the Jewish people, the march to the Land.

The beginning of the book of Bamidbar is an accountant's dream. Orderly, thorough, numbers, sums, structure.

But we know what will happen in this book of Bamidbar. There will be rebellions and disputes, the spies and Korach. On paper, there is order. In life, chaos.

Oh, that our national life would be so neat and tidy. You here, you here. You doing your task, you doing yours. All of us recognizing G-d in our midst. This is a lovely description of how we *ought* to live and how we *ought* to travel on into the Land of Israel.

But the book of Bamidbar is the meeting of the ideal with the real.



### 3RD ALIYA (5:1-10)

Command the people to send those, male or female, with Tzarat, or who are Zavim or Tamei out of the camp. The people did so. A man or woman who steals, swears denying the theft and then admits, shall repay the principal plus one fifth to the owner. If the owner has died leaving no heirs, the payment is paid to the kohen. The kohen's portions fully belong to him.

Following the description of the Jewish encampment and the Leviim's role in the travel of the camp, there is a break in the narrative. A few mitzvot are introduced.

However, these are not a break in the theme of the book, only a break in the narrative.

The theme of our national belonging is damaged occasionally by our behavior.

We have mitzvot of kindness, mitzvot of holiness, mitzvot of memory. And mitzvot related to our national belonging, to our social fabric.

Theft and then swearing to cover it up will not serve our national interest. Mistakes will happen. But coverups or lying to dismiss them is far more damaging to our social structure than admitting guilt. Mistakes are the stuff of humanity. Honesty and responsibility are the stuff of society. The Torah does not assume we will be perfect but it does demand that we be responsible and honest.



### 4TH ALIYA (5:11-6:27)

The **Sotah**: If a married woman is suspected by her husband of being unfaithful with a particular man and he warns her to not be alone with that man, and she nonetheless spends time alone with that man, then she is brought to the kohen. She brings a simple offering. The kohen places water and dust in a container. She swears that she is innocent (of adultery). The kohen

writes in a scroll that should she be guilty, the water she will drink will cause fatal internal damage. These words are put in the water. Her offering is brought; the water is drunk by her. If she is guilty, this will be fatal. If innocent, this will prove it. The **Nazir**: When a person vows to be a Nazir, they may not drink wine or any product from a grape, may not cut their hair and may not come in contact with the dead, including closest relatives. If the Nazir does come in contact with the dead before the conclusion of his Nazir status, then he must bring an offering of 2 birds, one for a chatat and one for an olah. At the final end of his Nazir status, he brings animals for a chatat, an olah and a shlamim. He cuts his hair and burns it. **Birkat Kohanim**: Tell Aharon that he shall bless the Jewish people with Birkat Kohanim: in so doing they place My name on the people and I bless them.

The 2 elaborate mitzvot mentioned here, Sotah and Nazir, are breaches in communal life, hence mentioned here in this book of the communal march to the Land. The Sotah, the wife suspected of adultery, is a breakdown in the holiness of family life, a societal foundation.

The Nazir is a breach in the reach for super holiness; as if to say the Torah isn't enough, isn't holy enough for me. Insufficient holiness is a breach, but no less a breach is super holiness.

While we like to say that we don't know which mitzvot are big ones and which are little, we can say that some mitzvot have societal impact that amplifies them. The violation of Shabbat was viewed as damaging our religious social fabric. And here, the holiness of family life has an outsized place in our Jewish society, with its breakdown having an outsized deleterious effect.

And the Nazir, who desires a super holy

life, can be viewed both positively and negatively. For him personally, the reach for super holiness seems a good thing. But his reach for super holiness implies that the Torah is insufficient. That can have a damaging effect on society



### 5TH ALIYA (7:1-41)

On the day Moshe completed, anointed and sanctified the Mishkan and all it contains, the leaders of the tribes brought a contribution. They brought 6 wagons and 12 oxen for the transport of the Mishkan: 2 wagons and 4 oxen were given to Gershon, 4 wagons and 8 oxen to Merari. Kehat did not receive any for they carried the vessels of the Mishkan on their shoulders. The leaders of each of the 12 tribes brought offerings as an inauguration of the Mishkan. Each day the leader of the tribe is named and his offering brought. Each leader's offering is identical.

Our parsha is the longest parsha in the Torah due to these last 3 aliyot. In fact, these 3 aliyot are only one chapter but a chapter of 89 verses, longer than many full parshiot.



### 6TH ALIYA (7:42-71)

The description of the leader's offerings continues, outlining days 6 to 10.

Each day a different Nasi, head of the tribe brought an offering, though the offering was identical each day. What a dichotomy. On the one hand differentiation; 12 tribes, variety, distinctions and individuality. On the other, conformity; the exact same offering from these diverse men. What an apt description of the human condition. We share eyes, ears,

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nose and mouth. Yet our inner life is unique, uniquely our own. Uniformity and diversity.



### 7TH ALIYA (7:72-89)

The description of the leader's offerings continues, with days 11 and 12. The Torah enumerates the totals of each of the offerings brought by the leaders. These served as inauguration of the anointed altar. When Moshe entered the Ohel Moed to speak with G-d, he heard the Voice emanate from upon the kaporet, the covering of the Aron, from between the angels and He spoke with him.

The parsha concludes with a repetition that G-d spoke to Moshe from above the Aron. Whereas the emphasis previously was on the magic of the meeting of G-d and man, here the emphasis is on the content: Moshe acts on Divine instruction, not his own personal power and pride. ■



### STATS

35th of 54 sedras; 2nd of 10 in Bamidbar. Written on 311 lines in a Sefer Torah. That's a record breaking 7.4 columns 26 parshiyot; 18 open, 8 closed. Only 4 sedras have more parshiyot. 176 pesukim, 2264 words, 8632 letters. Indisputably the longest sedra in the Torah, however you count length. Naso is well below average, though, in length of pesukim, but not enough to affect its first place ranking.



### MITZVOT

18 mitzvot; 7 positive, 11 prohibitions - the most of Bamidbar's 10 sedras. 18 might not seem to be that many mitzvot, but only 9 sedras in the Torah (of 54) have more mitzvot than Naso.



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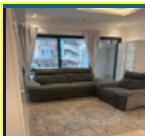
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## THE PERSON IN THE PARSHA

BY RABBI DR. TZVI HERSH WEINREB  
OU EXECUTIVE VICE PRESIDENT, EMERITUS

# “Two Very Different Texts”

The Ten Commandments and the *Book of Ruth* are two very different biblical texts, yet they both will be read on the upcoming festival of Shavuot. In Israel, where Shavuot is celebrated for just one day, they are even read on the very same day. These two texts are as important to the intellectual appreciation and religious experience of Shavuot as blintzes and cheesecake are to the culinary celebration of this beautiful holiday. Yet they are strikingly different from each other. We are puzzled to find them sharing the center stage of this holiday.

After all, it is “The time of the giving of the Torah!” What connects the *Book of Ruth*, a simple pastoral tale, to the central theme of this festival? Would not some other biblical passage serve as a more apt companion to the Ten Commandments? Why commemorate the momentous occasion of God’s Revelation on Mount Sinai with this charming, but surely not momentous story?

To answer this question let us ponder the plot of the *Book of Ruth*. It is often included in anthologies of the world’s greatest short stories where it is erroneously classified as a tale illustrating that good deeds lead to happy endings. But a careful reading of the book, which I encourage all of you to undertake in preparation for Shavuot, reveals that this story is by no means merely an idyllic morality tale.

The characters of the *Book of Ruth* suffer

almost every conceivable human tragedy: famine, betrayal, exile, sudden death, bereavement, widowhood, loneliness, poverty and shame. The book begins with the depiction of a demoralized nation of Israel, devastated by famine. One noble family deserts its brethren and betrays its homeland. The family soon experiences the pangs of exile. Its sons marry women of an alien culture, further betraying their heritage. Death strikes swiftly, leaving three widows, and one bereaved mother. Two of the women return home in shame and loneliness, with a life of poverty in store for them.

Both women, mother-in-law Naomi and daughter-in-law Ruth, return home with hope. Naomi’s is the hope of desperation. She has no choice but to hope. But Ruth’s is the hope of courage and commitment: “Wherever you go, I will go; wherever you dwell, I will dwell; your people shall be my people and your God my God.” (*Book of Ruth* 1:16)

This makes for a stirring and inspirational narrative. But the question remains: What does this drama have to do with *zman matan Torateinu*, the “time of the giving of the Torah?” Does this tale match up to the majesty and power of the Ten Commandments? What connection is there between God’s Universal Laws, His do’s and don’ts for the human race, and this sad tale? How does this story, in which God barely plays a role, find its way

into the liturgy of a day which celebrates the most foundational religious experience? God Himself utters the Ten Commandments, but His name appears only incidentally in the *Book of Ruth!*

For me, the answer is apparent. Two texts are chosen for Shavuot. One tells of the laws, standards, and requirements of a just and successful society. The Ten Commandments incorporate, as our Rabbis have demonstrated, the Torah's highest values: compassion, generosity, loyalty, and responsibility for each other. The *Book of Ruth* proffers but one example of a society which defies those values with disastrous consequences, but achieves inspiring results when it abides by them.

The Rabbis (*Yalkut Ruth*, 594) tell us that the *Book of Ruth* is read on Shavuot, the anniversary of the giving of the Torah, to teach us that one must be prepared for suffering and poverty in one's search to master Torah. *Mastery* of Torah does not come easy, and a life led according to the Torah's precepts calls for significant sacrifice. But eventually, the difficulties entailed by a total commitment to the Torah's demands prove to be the very sources of a life of happiness and fulfillment.

The tragic circumstances of the *Book of Ruth* gradually recede. Loneliness is overcome by a caring community, shame is lifted by understanding and forgiveness, poverty is ended by charity, and widowhood is overcome by love. Even the bereavement is eventually softened by rebirth.

Rabbi Zeira in the Midrash (*Ruth Rabbah* 2:15) wonders: "This scroll teaches us nothing about ritual purity or impurity, nor does it inform us about what is forbidden and what is permissible. Why then was it given a place in the Biblical canon?" To which he answers, "It is in order to teach us about the benefits

which ensue from a life lived with compassion and loving-kindness."

The Ten Commandments describe the ultimate encounter of Man with God. Our sages teach us that the *Book of Ruth* was written by the Prophet Samuel. In it he tells us a story which is but an illustration of the lesson that our father Abraham taught us by his example centuries before Samuel: "Loving-kindness, exemplified by simple hospitality, pre-empted even the direct experience of the Almighty's Presence!"

The Ten Commandments declare God's expectations of His people. The tale of Ruth and Naomi epitomizes His people's history. Our people have known all of the tragedies described in the story, and more. But as we have persisted through those tragedies we have come to glimpse what a truly benevolent society can resemble. We have experienced, albeit thus far never yet completely, the blessings of redemption.

Those blessings result from our adherence to the values of the Ten Commandments, one of the texts we read on Shavuot. One example of those blessings is described in the other text we read on Shavuot, the *exquisitely* uplifting *Book of Ruth*, which culminates in the birth of King David, the symbol and progenitor of the Messiah, with whom will come the final redemption. ■

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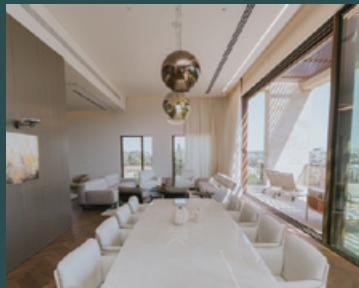
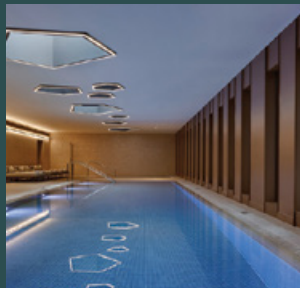
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# COVENANT & CONVERSATION

THOUGHTS ON THE WEEKLY PARSHA

RABBI LORD JONATHAN SACKS ZT"l

FORMER CHIEF RABBI OF THE UNITED HEBREW CONGREGATIONS OF THE COMMONWEALTH

May the learning of these Divrei Torah be לעילוי נשמת  
**HaRav Ya'akov Zvi ben David Arie'el zt"l**

לעילוי נשמות

פנחס בן יעקב אשר וגולדה בת ישראל דוד אייז ע"ה ועזריאל בן אריה לייב ומעניה בת יצחק שרטור ע"ה

## What Counts?

This week's sedra begins with a continuation of the census begun in last week's – the act that gives the entire book its English name: the book of "Numbers." Two things, though, are puzzling. The first is the very act of numbering the people. Jewish tradition conveys two quite different - apparently contradictory - attitudes toward the taking of a census.

Rashi notes that this is not the first time the people had been counted. Their number ("about six hundred thousand men on foot, not including women and children") had already been given as they prepared to leave Egypt (Ex. 12:37). A more precise calculation

had been made when the adult males each gave a half shekel toward the building of the Sanctuary (yielding a total of 603, 550; Ex. 38:26). Now a third count was taking place. Why the repeated calculations?

Rashi's answer is simple and moving:

Because they (the children of Israel) are dear to Him, God counts them often. He counted them when they were about to leave Egypt. He counted them after the Golden Calf to establish how many were left. And now that He was about to cause His Presence to rest on them (with the inauguration of the Sanctuary), He counted them again. (*Rashi on Bamidbar 1:10*)

For Rashi, the counting of the people was an act of Divine love. Yet this is not the impression we receive elsewhere. To the contrary, the Torah sees the taking of a census as profoundly dangerous:

Then the Lord said to Moshe, "When you take the census of the Israelites, as you count, each must give ransom for his life to the Lord, so that no plague strikes them when you count them. (*Ex. 30:11-12*)

Centuries later, when King David counted the people, there was a moment of Divine anger, during which 70, 000 died. It seems hard to reconcile the idea of counting as an act of love with the fact that counting involves



great risk.

The second source of perplexity is the phrase the Torah uses to describe the act of counting: *naso/se'u et rosh*, literally, "lift the head." There are many verbs available in classical Hebrew to indicate the act of counting: *limnot*, *lifkod*, *lispur*, *lachshov*. Why, in the books of Exodus and Numbers, does the Torah resort to the strange circumlocution, "lift the heads" of the Israelites?

To understand the revolution the Hebrew Bible brought to the world, we have first to enter imaginatively into the consequences for humanity of the birth of civilisation. In the earliest hunter-gatherer societies, people lived together in small groups. There were, as yet, no cities, no states, no large concentrations of population. The Torah attributes the building of the first city to Cain.<sup>1</sup> Cities emerged with the birth of agriculture – in the fertile alluvial plain in Mesopotamia between the Tigris and Euphrates, and the well-irrigated Nile delta.

Twice in the book of Genesis the Torah sketches a portrait of urban culture: first, the Tower of Babel, second, the Egypt to which Joseph is brought as a slave. They are both highly critical accounts. In Babel, human life was cheap (when the Tower was being built, said the Sages, if a person fell and died, no one noticed. If a brick fell, they wept). In Egypt, entire populations – among them, eventually, the children of Israel – could be pressed into service as a labour force to build pyramids, temples and monuments, many of which still stand today.

The birth of agriculture and the growth of towns had huge social implications. For the first time, surplus wealth was possible and could be stored in the form of money (initially, precious metals such as silver and gold). So

1. See Gen. 4:17.



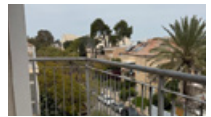
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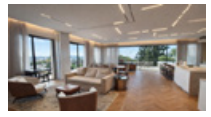
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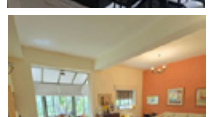


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too, as populations expanded and the division of labour became more elaborate, social stratification began. Inequality – deep, pervasive, and systemic – became one of the universal features of the earliest societies. At the top was the king, emperor, or pharaoh, seen as no less than a god or child of the gods, who held a massive concentration of power. Below him or her were the various ranks of privilege: court circles, military chiefs, administrators and priests. The mass of the people – poor, illiterate, expendable – was significant, whether as an army or a construction force, as a mass, by sheer weight of numbers. Hence the significance of censuses in the ancient world (and in this respect, little has changed from then to now). *Size meant strength*, military or economic. Population counts gave rulers information about the size of the army they could muster, or of the income they could

raise by taxation.

The religion of Israel is a sustained protest against this view – military, political, and economic – of the human situation. At this distance in time, it is hard fully to appreciate the breathtaking novelty, the transformative potential, of the cluster of ideas generated by a single revelation – that *the human person as such, man or woman, rich or poor, powerful or powerless*, is the image of God and therefore of non-negotiable, unquantifiable value. *We are each equally in the image of God, therefore we stand equal in the presence of God.* Much of Torah, Jewish history, and the development of Western civilization is about the slow translation of this idea into institutions, social structures, and ethical codes.

It should now be clear why the taking of a census is fraught with spiritual risk. *The numbering of a people is the most potent symbol of humankind-in-the-mass, of a society in which the individual is not valued in and for him- or herself but as part of a totality whose power lies in numbers.* That is precisely what Israel is not. The God of Israel, who is the God of all humankind, sets His special love on a people whose strength has nothing to do with numbers, a people that never sets itself to become an empire, that is never commanded to wage holy war in order to convert populations, that was and remains tiny in both absolute terms and relative to the empires with which it was and is surrounded, standing as it does at the vulnerable crossroad between three continents.

Both questions with which we began are now answered. There is a difference between a human census and one commanded by God. David's was a human census. As Israel's second king, he had laid the foundations of a nation. He had waged successful wars, united

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the tribes, and established Jerusalem as his capital. Shortly after his death, Israel reached its zenith as a power in the Middle East. Under Solomon, through strategic alliances, it became a centre of trade and scholarship. The Temple was built. It must have seemed at the time as if, after many centuries of wandering and war, Israel had become a power to rival any other. It was a short-lived, cruelly-shattered illusion. Almost immediately after Solomon's reign, the kingdom split in two, and from then on its this-worldly fate was sealed. A history of defeats, exiles and destructions began, which has no parallel in the annals of any other nation. The Hebrew Bible is not wrong in seeing the starting-point of this decline in the moment at which David acted like any other king and ordered a census of the people.

A Divine census is utterly different. It has nothing to do with strength-in-numbers. It has to do, instead, with conveying to every member of the nation that he or she counts; that every person, family, household is held precious by God; that distinctions between great and small, ruler and ruled, leader and led, are irrelevant; that we are each God's image and the object of His love. A Divine census is, as Rashi says, a gesture of endearment. That is why it cannot be described by the usual verbs of counting — *limnot*, *lifkod*, *lispor*, *lachshov*. Only the phrase *naso/se'u et rosh*, "lift the head", does justice to this kind of enumeration, in which those entrusted with the task are commanded to "lift the head" of those they count, making every individual stand tall in the knowledge that they are loved, cherished, held special by God, and not merely a number, a cipher, among the thousands and millions.

There is a wonderful verse in Psalm 147

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which we say every morning in our prayers: “He counts the number of the stars and calls them each by name.” A name is a marker of uniqueness. Collective nouns group things together; proper names distinguish them as individuals. Only what we value, do we name (One of the most chilling acts of dehumanisation in the extermination camps of Nazi Germany was that those who entered were never addressed by their names. Instead they were given, inscribed on their skin, a number).

God gives even the stars their names, all the more so human beings – on whom He has set His image. God counts to signal to us that each of us counts, for what we are as individuals, not *en masse*. He “lifts our head” in the most profound way known to humankind, by assuring each of us of His special, enduring, unquantifiable love.

That is the nature of the census in the book of Numbers. As the Israelites prepared to become a society with the Sanctuary - visible home of the Divine Presence - at its centre, they had to be reminded that they were to become the pioneers of a new and revolutionary social order, whose most famous definition was given by the Prophet Zechariah as the Israelites prepared to rebuild the ruined Temple:

“Not by might, nor by strength, but by My spirit, says the Lord.” (*Zechariah 4:6*) ■

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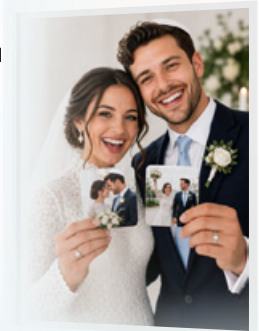
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BY RABBI NACHMAN (NEIL) WINKLER  
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# “M’lo Khol Ha’aretz K’vodo”

On Chag Shavuot, we read the opening perek of Sefer Yechezkel as the haftarah for the day. It is in this chapter that the navi portrays the “Ma’aseh Mercava”, Hashem’s revelation of His heavenly throne, to Yechezkel. This prophetic vision was considered so impactful, so mystical and so easily misunderstood, that the Mishna in Megilla (25a) states: “Ein Maftirin B’Merkava”, that we may **not** read this prophecy for the haftarah... so why do we???

The answer lies in the self- same Mishna, where it quotes the view of Rabbi Yehuda who **does** permit the reading and, furthermore, the Gemara (on 31a) states that we follow his view. It is, however, quite rare to find the Talmud establishing the halacha according to the view of the minority! Unquestionably, Chazal must have found a powerful reason to ignore the majority opinion in favor of accepting the view of Rabbi Yehuda, to allow the public recitation of “Ma’aseh Mercava”. It is up to us, therefore, to uncover what reason they might

have had and why our Rabbis felt it particularly fitting for the holiday of Shavuot.

In his commentary on that Gemara, Rashi states that Shavuot marks the day when, like Yechezkel, Israel experienced a revelation. And, although the Torah mentions that Israel heard Hashem’s words but saw no image of Him (see D’varim 4; 12), the Tanchuma states that they **did** see 22, 000 chariots of angels that accompanied G-d to Har Sinai. Rashi relies on that Tanchuma.

Rav Yehudah Shaviv, attempting to unravel the underlying logic of the Tanchuma suggests that the scholars assumed that, if Hashem shared the vision of a heavenly chariot accompanied by fire and cloud to but one person, Yechezkel, it is only logical that, if thousands of people also saw a prophetic vision accompanied by fire and clouds, Hashem would have certainly shown thousands of chariots to such a gathering.

The Zohar, on the other hand, simply posits

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that Yechezkel's vision took place on Shavuot, as did that of B'nai Yisrael, and this was why Chazal insisted that it be read on Shavuot.

Rav Shaviv, however, shares his own reason for Chazal's choice of this haftarah. The theophany experienced by Israel at Har Sinai was the most powerful revelation of Hashem's glory ever, having been witnessed by three million people!!! As one of my rebbeim once said, it was an unimpeachable historical event, having millions of onlookers who could testify to its veracity.

Yechezkel, who prophesied in the galut, also had a revelation. As Israel entered its first Diaspora after having seen the destruction of their land and their Temple, it was only natural for them to believe that Hashem had abandoned them. Yechezkel's then opens his prophecies with **his** theophany, that took place **NOT** at Har Sinai **NOR** in Eretz Yisrael, but at N'har K'var in Babylonia. That important fact taught the exiles that they were **NOT** abandoned - because Hashem is with them even in galut.

If so, we must realize how wise and sensitive our Rabbis were by leaving such an important message to the newly exiled nation. Our nation should understand how G-d watches over them at the sanctified Mt. Sinai, in the Holy Land and even in the darkness of Exile.

Two thousand years of the horrors of galut should have taught us that.

Indeed, "m'lo khol ha'aretz k'vodo". ■

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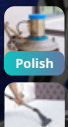
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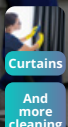
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# The Wagons – On a Unified Path

In *Parashat Vayigash*, the Torah describes the moment when Yaakov Avinu learns that Yosef is still alive. The brothers return from Egypt and deliver the astonishing news:

וַיִּדְבְּרוּ אֵלָיו אֶת כָּל דְּבָרֵי יוֹסֵף אֲשֶׁר דִּבֶּר אֲלֵהֶם... וַיֵּרָא  
אֶת הָעֲגָלוֹת אֲשֶׁר שָׁלַח יוֹסֵף לְשֵׂאת אוֹתוֹ – וַתְּחִי רוּחַ  
יַעֲקֹב אֲבִיהֶם

“They told him all the words of Yosef that he had spoken to them... and he saw the wagons that Yosef had sent to carry him, and the spirit of Yaakov their father was revived.”<sup>1</sup>

At first glance, the verse seems straightforward. Yosef sent wagons to transport his father to Egypt and seeing them convinced Yaakov that the message was genuine. Yet Rashi famously cites a Midrash that reads the verse more deeply. The word *Agalot* (wagons) alludes to *eglah arufah* - the last topic of Torah that Yosef and Yaakov had studied together before Yosef was sold. Through this subtle hint, Yosef demonstrated that he remained spiritually connected to his father, and Yaakov recognized the message.

However, the Da’at Zekenim MiBa’alei HaTosafot offer a different interpretation. The *agalot* that revived Yaakov’s spirit were not symbolic references to *eglah arufah*. Rather,

they referred to the actual wagons described later in the Torah, in *Parashat Naso*.

In *Parashat Naso*, the leaders of the twelve tribes- the *nesi'im* - bring offerings for the dedication of the Mishkan. Each *nasi* brings his own korban, and the Torah describes their gifts in painstaking detail. Indeed, the repetition of these offerings is what makes Parashat Naso the longest parasha in the Torah.

When the Torah summarizes the offerings, we find a striking pattern: *Twelve silver bowls, twelve basins, twelve golden ladles - everything appears in groups of twelve, corresponding to the twelve tribes*. Yet at the beginning of the section we encounter something unexpected: “וַיָּבִיאוּ אֶת קִרְבָּנָם לִפְנֵי ה' שֵׁשׁ עֲגָלוֹת צֶבַע וּשְׁנַיִם עֶשְׂרִי בָקָר – עֲגָלָה עַל שְׁנֵי הַנְּשָׂאִים.”

“They brought their offering before Hashem: six covered wagons and twelve oxen— one wagon for every two princes.”<sup>2</sup>

Here the pattern changes. Instead of twelve wagons, one for each prince, there are only **six**. Why is that?

Rabbi Yissocher Frand<sup>3</sup> suggests a profound explanation. The *nesi'im* were clearly not trying to economize. These were leaders who spared no expense in honoring the Mishkan. If they wished to reduce costs, they could have done so in many other aspects of the offerings. Rather, their decision was deliberate and symbolic. Each prince brought his own individual korban, representing the unique identity of his *shevet*. Yet such individuality carried a potential danger. If every tribe acted entirely

2. Bamidbar 7:3

3. Rabbi Yissachar Frand; *On the Parasha Vol II*

1. Bereishit 45:27

on its own, differences could easily evolve into competition, rivalry, and division. The princes therefore made a conscious statement. While their offerings would be distinct, their wagons would be shared. Two princes per wagon.

By sharing the vehicles that transported the sacred materials, they demonstrated that even while maintaining their individual identities, the tribes remained interconnected parts of a single nation. Difference did not mean separation.

This insight allows us to understand the comment of the Da'at Zekenim. When the Torah says that Yaakov saw the *agalot* and his spirit was revived, it alludes to the future wagons of *Parashat Naso*. It was the wagons that symbolized the unity of the tribes.

Yaakov Avinu's life had been shadowed by a troubling historical pattern. Avraham had two sons, yet Yishmael was excluded. Yitzhak had two sons, yet Esav was rejected. Would the same tragedy repeat itself?

For years Yaakov believed that Yosef had been lost. Perhaps, he feared, the covenant would again continue through only some of his children. Perhaps one tribe, or one brother, would ultimately be cast aside.

Even now, upon hearing that Yosef lived, another concern remained: What about the relationship between Yosef and the brothers? Would old jealousy resurface? Would resentment linger? Then Yaakov saw the *agalot*. Not merely wagons, but a vision of the future, a glimpse of a time when the descendants of his sons would remain distinct tribes yet united as one people. He realized that the family would not fracture. The tribes might differ in character, mission, and blessing, but they would still move forward together.

At that moment, "וַיִּתְחַי רִיחַ יַעֲקֹב אֲבִיהֶם" - Yaakov's spirit was revived.

## THE DEEPER MESSAGE

The symbolism of the wagons carries a timeless message. Judaism never demanded uniformity. The twelve tribes were never meant to be identical. Each *shevet* possessed its own personality, strengths, and spiritual path. Yehudah embodied leadership, Yis-sachar scholarship, Zevulun commerce, and so forth. However, diversity was never meant to lead to fragmentation.

The wagons teach that distinct roles can still share the same vehicle. One may travel a different path yet still journey toward the same destination. This idea lies at the heart of the Jewish people's enduring strength. Our unity does not emerge from sameness. Rather, it emerges from the recognition that beneath our differences lies a shared covenant and shared destiny.

Yaakov Avinu understood that if his descendants could preserve the balance of individual identity alongside collective responsibility, then the future of Israel was secure. Perhaps this is why the Torah records that the sight of those wagons revived him. For in them he saw more than transportation. He saw the blueprint of Jewish survival: many tribes, one nation; many voices, one covenant; many journeys, one destiny.

When we remember that lesson and we learn to carry the Mishkan together, even while standing as individuals, we too fulfill the vision that gave Yaakov renewed life. For the true strength of Am Yisrael has always been the ability to travel forward, side by side in the same wagon, as a unified people. ■

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## Powerful Preparation

It is fascinating to realize how much preparation the Torah dedicates to the holiday of Shavouth. We have the 49 day count, which automatically builds anticipation and yearning. We then have the week itself before Shavouth that is replete with special energy. On Rosh Chodesh the people come to Har Sinai, and one feels the anticipation mounting. The week before Shavouth we have a day referred to 'yom hamyuchas' a day we were told that we are the chosen and special nation. Likewise, we have the 'shloshet yemei hagbalah' the three days of preparation. Why does Shavouth have so much build up?

The Sefer Hachinuch offers a classic answer when explaining the mitzvah of Sefirat HaOmer. The count is in order to build an excitement and anticipation towards the receiving of the Torah. This anticipation is in order to

underscore the importance of Torah as the essence and totality of our lives. Each year as we enter into this time we remind ourselves of the centrality of Torah and ensure that we realign our values with that of the will of Hashem.

R. Biderman in Be'er Hachayim suggests that one method of tapping into this energy is through focusing during the week prior to Shavouth in the tefilla of Ahava Rabbah. This tefilla is the quintessential tefilla asking Hashem to help enlighten our eyes in Torah, and enabling us to experience the beauty and love of Torah. Indeed, many yeshivot despite learning the entire night of Shavouth, would spend a few hours reciting Ahava Rabbah on Shavouth morning. Where one invests their heartfelt tefillot is an indication of what is really important for them.

Another reason why there is so much build up toward Shavouth is because it is a yom hadin. Similar to Elul which prepares for the yom hadin of Rosh Hashana, the 49 days of sefira, are a preparation of the yom hadin of Shavouth. The Shelah Hakadosh notes that the yom hadin of Shavouth is on one's ruchniyus for the entire year. On Shavouth it is decided how many times we will be inspired when we daven. How often we will be inspired by listening to a shiur. How much we will be influenced by our spiritual mentors to make changes in our lives. While Rosh Hashana decides how much money we will be given during the course of the year, Shavouth is how much we will be inspired spiritually over the year.

Sefirat Haomer is a time of working on oneself in increased Torah learning, and middot

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improvement. It is a time to show Hashem and ourselves how this is the focal point of our lives, readying ourselves for this time of judgement. Minhag Yisrael is to learn Torah the night of Shavouth, and to complete sefer Tehilim on the day of Shavouth. Being moser nefesh to devote oneself on the day of Shavouth for both learning and tefilla is a zechus to be able to be judged for a year replete with spiritual opportunities of growth and connection. ■

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# SIMCHAT SHMUEL

BY RABBI SAM SHOR  
DIRECTOR, TORAH INITIATIVES,  
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Perhaps the most well known tradition associated with the *Yom Tov* of *Shavuot* is the custom to stay awake the entire night, in symbolic anticipation and preparation for the reenactment of *Kabbalat HaTorah*. As we recall this seminal event in Jewish History each year, we may actually be fulfilling a fascinating mystical concept as well.

There is a teaching in the *Mishna, (Pirkei Avot 1:15)* which introduces to us the concept of the frequency of *Torah* study. The text teaches us in the name of *Shammai*: “*Asei Toratcha Keva*”- *Make your study of Torah a kviut- an established, regular part of your daily life.*

On the simplest of levels-this is very obvious, in order for a Jew to live life as a Jew, to fulfill all aspects of Jewish ritual and living, one must be engaged in the on-going pursuit of knowledge, and continue to address all of life’s issues through the lens and guidance of the eternal wisdom of the *Torah HaKedosha*.

The *Talmud, (Masechet Shabbat 31 a)* echoes this sentiment: “*Amar Rava: beshaa shemachnisin adam ladin omrim lo:...kavata*

*itim latorah?*” *“Rava said: When a soul appears before the Heavenly tribunal to be judged, he will be asked: ‘Did you set aside time for the study of Torah?’”*

The **Rambam**, in the opening chapter of the laws of *Talmud Torah*, spells out in specific terms the importance of regular *Torah* study and some of its parameters. In the eighth entry he writes:

“*Kol Ish MiYisrael chayav b’talmud torah, bein ani, bein ashir, bein shalom b’gufo, bein baal yisurin, bein bachur, bein shehaya zakein gadol shetashsash kocho. Afilu ani hamitparneis min hatzedaka umchazer al hapetachim, v’afilu baal isha uvanim-chayav likboa lo zeman letalmud torah bayom uvalaylasheneemar-“V’hagita bo Yomam Valayla (Yehoshua 1:8)...”*

*“Every Jew is required to study Torah, whether impoverished or wealthy, healthy or ill, young or old and weak. Even a beggar who is dependent on charity, and who must go door to door, and a man with a wife and family to support must devote time to study Torah day and night, as stated in the verse: “and you shall discuss it day and night... (Joshua 1:8).”*

It seems the **Rambam** adds an additional stringency to this idea of regular *Torah* study-that one must set aside time to study regularly **both bayom**-during the daytime as well as *balayla*- in the evening.

There is a fascinating statement which might help us better understand this idea, in the first comments of the **Magen Avraham**, the important legal work and commentary on the *Shulchan Aruch* written by

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In the very first entry in this work, he wrote: *“Beshelah Katuv: sod lechibeir yom velayla betorah oh betefilla, bein baboker, bein baerev...”* *“It is written in the **Shnei Luchot HaBrit** (two tablets of the law written by the 16th Century Kabbalist Rabbi Yeshayahu Horowitz, of Prague): it is a mystical fundamental to join together day and night with Torah study or with prayer, both at daybreak, and at nightfall...”*

What exactly is the *Kabbalistic* significance that the **Shnei Luchot Habrit** refers to, in joining the day and night or night to day, through either *Torah* or *Tefilla*?

*Shlomo HaMelech in Mishlei (Proverbs) wrote- “Ki Ner Mitzva, v’Torah Ohr”-‘Each mitzva is like a candle and the Torah is light.*

The Chasidic Masters often speak of the analogy of the light of *Torah* outshining the darkness in the world. When a Jew brings a little bit of *Torah* into the twilight zone at the end of each day, or from the night into the early hours of the morning, symbolically, mystically they are contributing to bring the light of the Divine into this world which is often seen as being full of darkness and confusion.

Perhaps this is another possible reason for the custom to stay awake studying *Torah* the entire night on *Shavuot*. On the very day we anxiously and joyously prepare ourselves to once again symbolically stand and accept the *Torah* at *Sinai*, we simultaneously and symbolically help to bring the light and perspective of *Torah* into this world of confusion. On *Shavuot* we rejoice that we have received the gift of *Torah* as a source of guidance and inspiration which helps to bring light, clarity and meaning to our lives, and to the world around us.... Chag Sameach! ■

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# Shavuot: Stay Until Sunday

As a therapist and guide, the prominent author of *Living in the Presence*, Rabbi Dr. Benjamin Epstein, integrates traditional mindfulness with spiritual and cognitive-behavioral techniques. In advance of *Zeman Matan Toraseinu*, the celebration of the giving of the Torah on Shavuot, my dear friend (and bandmate) shares the following instructive *ma'aseh*:

There was a busy Chassidische businessman who had been procrastinating and putting off his regular visit to see his rebbe. When he finally found time to visit, he decided he would stay for Shabbos and leave immediately after.

Normally, he would receive a warm welcome from the tzadik upon arrival, but this time the rebbe barely acknowledged him. The chasid felt insulted and asked if everything was okay. The rebbe looked at him and

responded: “A chasid who can’t stay until Sunday doesn’t need to be here on Shabbos either.”

The chasid regretted the way he had come to his rebbe, had a change of heart, and said, “I’m here as long as the rebbe wants me to be.”

That Shabbos at Shalosh Seudos the rebbe taught the pasuk of Matan Torah: *Vayomer Hashem el Moshe, Alei Alai heHara, veHeyeh Sham* (Shemos 24:12), “Come up to me to the Mountain and *be there*.” The rebbe asked, “What does the seemingly extra phrase *veHeyeh Sham* teach us? Sometimes there’s a chasid who is coming to see his rebbe, and while on his way, he’s already leaving. So certainly, even when he is there, he isn’t really there.”

Hashem tells Moshe — and instructs each one of us — that it’s not enough to ascend the Mountain. ‘I just want you to be with Me, *veHeyeh Sham*, be there.’

When it comes to celebrating Shavuot, *Zeman Matan Toraseinu*, the Time of the Giving of Our Torah, there are a lot of Minhagim that come along with it. Whether it’s learning Torah all night, going to the Mikveh at dawn, or eating milchigs, we sometimes go about the Yom Tov like busy ‘businessmen’. It’s easy to forget that the main focus of Shavuot is simply to stop, be present, and ‘receive the Torah’. On Shavuot, Hashem invites us to come up to the Mountain of Revelation and just be there with Him.

A common misconception regarding Shavuot is that the primary way to celebrate it is through learning Torah. *Kabbalas haTorah* is

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not the same as *Limud haTorah*; receiving the Torah is not the same as learning Torah.

Every day, we pursue the value of *Talmud Torah K'neged Kulam*, "The Torah study takes precedence over all." All year round, we attempt to observe *VeHagisa Bo Yomam v'Laila*, "and meditate in it day and night;" there is no set time for the Mitzvah of *Talmud Torah*. We are called to Torah day and night, everywhere, at all times. Thus, '*Limud HaTorah*', studying, is not essentially connected to the observance and celebration of Shavuos.

On Shavuos we simply aim to relive the experience of Revelation, our *Maamad Har Sinai*, "standing in awe at Mount Sinai". We focus on experiencing our collective joy at receiving the Torah. This experience is beyond the activity of delving into the information, the mitzvos, and the philosophy of Torah. It is beyond observing the specific Minhagim of the Yom Tov. Shavuos is a holiday of *Dveikus*, "being with Hashem", connecting with and celebrating our relationship with the *Nosein HaTorah*, the Giver of the Torah.

Zohar teaches, *Istakel b'Oraisa uBara Alma*, "Hashem looked into the Torah and created the world." Torah predates Har Sinai, and therefore even when we are not learning, we are connected to it. On Shavuos, we realize that Torah is the context of our lives; *Ki Heim Chayeinu...* 'Torah is our life itself.'

This brings us to a deceptively profound and deep teaching of our *Bubbies* and *Savtas*: "Shavuos is the best of the *Shalosh Regalim*, the Three Festivals. On Pesach we may eat wherever we want, but not whatever we want. On Sukkos, we can eat whatever we want, but not wherever we want. But on Shavuos, we can eat whatever we want, whenever we want, wherever we want!"

Whether we are davening or reciting the *Tikkun Layl Shavuos* in shul, celebrating at home, or eating Milchigs or Fleishigs at a Yom Tov Seudah; whether it is day or night, we are sleeping or awake, the main expression of *Zeman Matan Toraseinu* is the awareness of this special opportunity to "be with Hashem." Whatever we are doing it is to celebrate our receiving of the Torah by affirming that Torah embraces and addresses every facet of our lives. Wherever we are, whatever we are doing, Hashem wants us to "be with Him," and to enjoy! ■

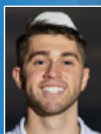
.....  
Excerpt from Rav Judah's upcoming "Baderech: Along the Path of the Torah" (Summer 2026/5786)

**Rav Judah Mischel** is executive director of Camp HASC, the Hebrew Academy for Special Children. He is the founder of Tzama Nafshi and the author of the "Baderech" series. Rav Judah lives in Ramat Beit Shemesh with his wife Ora and their family.

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## This Week's Inspiration

**SUNDAY  
MAY 24**

\*The schedule is subject to change



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THE BAIS CLASSES & PROGRAMS ARE FOR MEN ONLY

**MONDAY  
MAY 25**

**8:30 PM**

The Bais (for Men) Semichat Chaver Program Rav Elyada Goldwicht

@ **Bet Knesset Ohel Yitzchak**  
Keren Hayesod St.

**7:00 PM**

Dorot Choir with Hadassah Jacob  
@ Diskin 1 St.



**TUESDAY  
MAY 26**

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## COMMUNITY BEIT MIDRASH IN BAKAA

Classes @ Bet Knesset Nitzanim, 3 Asher Street, Bakaa

**9:20 AM**

Understanding Tefila

**Rabbi Yossi Goldin**

**11:25 AM**

P'shat in the Parsha

**Rabbi Shmuel Goldin**

**10:10 AM**

Rambam: Letters & Introductions

**Rabbi Yitzchak Breitowitz**

**12:20 PM**

Unlocking the Messages of Chazal

**Rabbi Shai Finkelstein**

## TORAH TUESDAYS WITH THE WOMEN'S DIVISION

Classes @ Beit Knesset HaNassi, 24 Ussishkin St. Rechavia

**9:15AM**

Torah Tapestries with

**Mrs. Shira Smiles**

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## MODIIN-THE BAIS

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# This Week's Inspirational Torah Learning with OU Israel

**WEDNESDAY  
MAY 27**

## **COMMUNITY BEIT MIDRASH IN RECHAVIA**

@ Bet Knesset HaNassi,  
24 Ussishkin St., Rechavia

**9:15AM**

Holy Poetry

**Rabbi Dr. Aaron Adler**

**10:20AM**

Contemporary Issues  
in Halacha and Hashkafa

**Rabbi Anthony Mannin**

**11:25 AM**

Mussar and Self Improvement:  
A study of Rav Kook's sefer  
Midot HaRayah

**Rabbi Aaron Goldscheider**



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**THURSDAY  
MAY 28**

## **COMMUNITY BEIT MIDRASH IN ARNONA**

Community Beit Midrash Program  
@ Bet Knesset Shai Agnon, Corner  
of Leib Yaffe and Siegfried Moses  
Street

**9:15 AM**

Parshat HaShavua **Rabbi Ari Kahn**

**10:30AM**

Modern Masters **Rabbi Baruch  
Taub**

**11:25 AM**

Trailblazing the Text of Tanach  
**Rabbi Neil Winkler**

**12:20 P.M**

Modern Masters **Rabbi Sam Shor**

---

## **BET KNESSET OHEL YITZCHAK**

@ Keren Hayesod Street

**8:00 PM**

Halachic Controversies  
(the Bais) **Rabbi Aschi Dick**

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### **RABBI ADLER'S WED. SHIUR**

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### **RABBI ASCHI DICK'S MODIIN SHIURIM FOR THE ACADEMIC YEAR**

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### **RABBI BREITOWITZ'S SHIUR**

Dedicated anonymously Lilui Nishmat  
**Rochel Chana bat Harav Shimon a"h**

### **THE WED. MORNING BEIT MIDRASH PROGRAM IN RECHAVIA**

Dedicated for the 2026 academic year  
l'ilui nishmat: **Daniel ben David z"l**  
and **Limud bat Avraham Strauss a"h,**  
and **Mordechai ben Moshe z"l**  
and **Reizel bat Yosef Meir Marcus a"h,**  
zichronam livracha,  
parents of  
**Judy & Menachem Marcus**

### **SHIRA SMILES' SHIUR**

Dedicated for the year in memory of  
**Elhanan Efram Ben Abraham z"l**  
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### **RABBI YOSSI GOLDIN'S SHIUR**

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### **RABBI TAUB'S WEEKLY THUR. PARSHA SHIUR**

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### **RABBI ARI KAHN'S SHIUR**

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**Avigayil Sara bat Shaina Ahrona**

### **RABBI GOLDSCHIEDER'S WED. SHIUR**

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### **RABBI MANNING'S WED. SHIUR**

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# SEFER YEHOSHUA TIYUL FOR WOMEN



Thursday Morning, May 28

Join tour guide **Rivi Frankel** as we visit the Yarden River, where Bnei Yisrael crossed into the Land and enjoy a breathtaking view from Mitzpe Yericho overlooking the entire area. We'll also meet Mitzpe Yericho **Mayor Aliza Pilichowski** (a fellow Nach Yomi participant) and hear from her husband, **Rabbi Uri Pilichowski**, noted Israel advocate.

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**10:45PM** Ruth's Return (and her Lessons for us All)  
**Rabbi Dr. Tzvi Hersh Weinreb**



**11:45PM** "A Dilemma at the Front Lines:  
Add to Shabbat or Avoid Breaking It?" **Rabbi Joel Kenigsberg**



**12:45AM** Medinat Yisrael-A State to Celebrate and Contemplate  
**Rabbi Sam Shor**



**1:45AM** Why Choose a Nation, and Why Choose Us?  
**Rabbi Jesse Horn**



**2:45AM** Halachic Man:The Stories Rav Soloveitchik  
Loved to Tell and Their Meaning for Our Lives  
**Rabbi Aaron Goldscheider**



**3:45AM** After Mt. Sinai...Why Did We Blow it?  
**Rabbi YY Rubenstein**

**4:45AM** Megillat Rut  
**5:05AM** Shacharit

**Schedule is subject to change**

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Refreshments  
Served All Night





## From Revelation to Responsibility

By Rabbi Jeremy Perlow | Deputy Director of Torah Initiatives of OU Israel

What happens after an amazing, clear moment?

Bnei Yisrael heard Hashem's voice at Har Sinai.

Doing the right thing should have felt obvious and easy after that, right?

### PART 1: A VERY FAST FALL!

שמות לב:א

וַיִּרְא הָעָם כִּי־בָשַׁט מֹשֶׁה לְדַרְדֹּת מִן־הַהָר וַיִּקְהַל הָעָם עַל־אֶהָרֶן וַיֹּאמְרוּ אֵלָיו קוּמ עֲשֵׂה־לָּנוּ אֱלֹהִים  
Right after Har Sinai, when everything was so clear... B'nei Yisrael made the Golden Calf.

### DISCUSSION

- ▶ How could they mess up so quickly after such a powerful moment?
- ▶ Do you think they already forgot what it was like when Hashem spoke with them all at Har Sinai?!

**SHARE** Think of a time when:

- ▶ You felt really inspired (camp, a shiur, a special moment)
- ▶ You decided: "I'm going to change something!"
- ▶ Did it last? Why or why not?
- ▶ Big Idea

Sometimes strong feelings don't last forever. Real change takes more than just one powerful moment.

### PART 2: WHEN MOSHE BREAKS THE

לוחות שמות לב:ב

וַיְהִי כַּאֲשֶׁר קָרַב אֶל־הַמַּחֲנֶה וַיִּרְא אֶת־הָעֵגֹל וּמַחֲלַת וַיִּסְרֹ־אֶף מֹשֶׁה וַיִּשְׁלַךְ מִמִּדְּיוֹ אֶת־הַלַּחֹת וַיִּשְׂבֵר אֹתָם תַּחַת הַהָר:

Moshe sees the Golden Calf... and smashes the Luchot!

Now let's take a look at how Hashem feels regarding Moshe's decision...

שבת פו:ג

וּמִנְלַן דְּהַסְכִּים קַדוּשׁ בְּרוּךְ הוּא עַל יְדוֹ?  
שנאמר: "אשר שברת" (דברים יב) ואמר ריש לקיש י"שר כחך ששיברת את הלוחות!

Hashem says to Moshe: "Yasher koach for breaking them!"

- ▶ Wait... What?! Why would Hashem agree with Moshe's decision to break the Luchot?

The first Luchot were fully from Hashem. The second Luchot? Moshe helps make them.

- ▶ Hashem wanted Moshe to break the first set of Luchot so that B'nei Yisrael could partner together with Hashem to build the second set.

### DISCUSSION

Is something more meaningful when it's perfect... or when you help build it?



## SHARE

- ▶ Building something yourself vs. getting it ready-made
- ▶ Fixing a mistake instead of everything going perfectly

Which one of these do you think would be more helpful for you in the long-run? Why?

## PART 3: NOT IN HEAVEN “לא בשמים היא”

דברים לביב 4

לא בשמים הוא לאמור מי יעלה-לנו השמימה ויסקחה לנו וישמענו אתה ונגשנה:

The Torah is NOT in heaven!

בבא מציעא גט: 5

וזה הוא תנור של עקנאי. מאי עקנאי? אמר רב יהודה אמר שמואל: שהקיפון [הו] דברים קעקנא זו, וטמאהו. תנא: באותו היום השיב רבי אליעזר כל תשובות שבעולם, ולא קיבלו הימנו... אמר להם: אם הלכה כמותי - מן השמים יוכיחו. וצאתה בת קול ואמרה: מה לכם אצל רבי אליעזר, שהלכה כמותו בכל מקום. עמד רבי יהושע על רגליו ואמר: "לא בשמים היא!" מאי "לא בשמים היא"? אמר רבי ירמיה: שפבר נתנה תורה מהר סיני, אין אנו משגיחין בבת קול, שפבר כתבת בהר סיני בתורה "אחרי רבים להטות".

Rabbi Eliezer tries to prove he's right with open miracles — even a voice from Heaven says that he is correct! Rabbi Yehoshua responds: “לא בשמים היא” - [The Torah] is not in Heaven,” rather it is our responsibility to decide the Halacha.

- ▶ Think About This: Even when a Heavenly voice speaks... we don't follow it?!

## DISCUSSION

- ▶ Why doesn't a miracle decide the answer?
- ▶ Rabbi Yehoshua responded that the

“Torah is not in Heaven,” rather it's our responsibility to decide the Halacha. Why do you think Hashem couldn't just give us the laws and tell us what to do?

## BIG IDEA

Hashem gave us the Torah and trusts us to learn it, think about it, and apply it. That's a BIG responsibility! Hashem gives us this responsibility because He wants us to work hard to understand, further develop, and apply the Torah to our lives. He believes we can do it and we have to believe in ourselves as well!

## WRAP UP

Shavuot is not only about hearing Hashem speak once. It is about something even harder:

- ▶ Keeping going even once inspiration fades (as we learned in Part 1)
- ▶ Learning from our mistakes (as we learned in Part 2)
- ▶ Believe in our ability to work hard and succeed in our efforts to understand the Torah (as we learned in Part 3)

Maybe the greatest part of Har Sinai isn't what happened there, but what we continue to do after the experience ends...

## FINAL FAMILY CHALLENGE TOGETHER, DISCUSS:

- ▶ What is one small thing you can take from Shavuot this year that you can plan to keep doing even after the feeling of inspiration fades?





# Dairy Challah on Shavuot

Our Sages instituted many decrees relating to the possible mixture of milk and meat. One such decree is the prohibition against making dairy bread — meaning bread baked with dairy ingredients such as milk or butter mixed into the dough. Since dairy bread often appears identical to regular pareve bread, and because bread is a staple of nearly every meal, *Chazal* were concerned that one might mistakenly eat dairy bread together with meat, thereby violating the prohibition of *Basar Bechalav*.

Nevertheless, there are certain exceptions that permit the production of dairy bread, as we will discuss below. This halacha is particularly relevant in connection with the upcoming holiday of *Shavuot*.

## WHAT IS A DAVAR MU'AT?

The *Gemara* in *Pesachim* (36:a) rules that although making dairy bread is generally prohibited, if it is made “*Ke’ein Tura*” it is permissible both to produce and consume. There are different interpretations of this term. *Rashi* and several other commentators (see *Hagahot Sha’arei Dura* 60:2) explain it to mean that one may bake only a small amount. In halachic terminology, this is referred to as a *Davar Mu’at* — literally, “a small amount.”

The rationale is straightforward: a small

quantity is typically designated for immediate use at a specific meal, and therefore the baker will remember that the bread is dairy and use it only for a dairy or pareve meal. *Chazal’s* concern was primarily with larger quantities that might remain for a later meal, at which point one could forget that the bread is dairy and inadvertently eat it with meat.

*Shulchan Aruch* rules, following *Rashi*, that a “small amount” refers to enough bread for only one meal (YD 97:1). Any quantity beyond that is prohibited. If one baked more than this amount, the entire batch would become prohibited for consumption.

*Rema* (ibid), however, citing the *Terumat HaDeshen*, disagrees and maintains that the amount of bread normally consumed over the course of one full day is still considered a *Davar Mu’at*. Although the source of this dispute is not entirely clear, it would seem that according to *Rema*, one day is still considered a short enough period that a person will remember the bread’s dairy status.

## DETAILS OF DAVAR MU’AT

The ruling of *Rashi* appears quite strict and inflexible. According to *Rema*, however, several practical questions arise.

For example, if someone bakes dairy *challot* on Thursday for Shabbat, would the passage of time prohibit the *challot* from being considered a *Davar Mu’at*? Another question concerns *Seudah Shlishit*. In many communities, especially in shul, the meal can continue past *shekiyah*. Would one then be required to stop eating dairy challah once Shabbat has ended?

The answer to these questions is



straightforward. Although *Rema* permits enough bread for one full day, the definition is based on the amount normally eaten for that occasion — not necessarily on a strict twenty-four-hour period. Therefore, if it is clear that the *challot* were baked specifically for Shabbat meals, they may be baked on Thursday for use on Shabbat. Likewise, regarding *Seudah Shlishit*, if the challah was baked for the meals of that day, one may continue eating the leftovers even after *shekiyah*, since the original baking was within the permitted amount.

*Aruch HaShulchan* (YD 97:4) and other authorities' further rule that the measurement of a *Davar Mu'at* depends not only on one individual, but on the number of people participating in the meal. Accordingly, a large family may bake a much greater quantity of dairy bread, provided it will be consumed within the permitted timeframe. The same applies to large festive meals, such as a *Sheva Berachot* or *Brit Milah*, where the permissible quantity is determined by the expected participants.

Based on this ruling, later *poskim* discuss a case in which dairy bread was baked for a large gathering, but due to unforeseen circumstances the guests did not arrive or the meal was canceled. Are the leftovers still permitted, even though they will not be consumed that day?

The later *poskim* rule that since the bread was initially baked in a permissible manner, the decree against dairy bread does not “reappear” afterward. Therefore, even if the leftover bread remains for several days, it is still permitted for consumption (see *Arugat*

*Habosem* 97:4, *Darchei Teshuva* 97:5).

The same principle applies to Shabbat *challah*. However, if *challah* is consistently left over each week, it would indicate that too much is being baked, and the amount should therefore be reduced. Regarding baking dairy bread for one day and then freezing the leftovers for future use, this would also appear to be permitted according to *Rema*.

### SHAVUOT CHALLAH

As mentioned above, *Rema* rules that dairy bread baked for one full day is still considered a *Davar Mu'at* and is therefore permissible. *Rema* further notes that this opinion is supported by the custom of baking dairy *challah* for the dairy meal on *Shavuot*. Similar customs are mentioned by other authorities as well.

However, according to those who follow the ruling of *Shulchan Aruch*, one would need to make a recognizable change in the shape or appearance of the *challah* to indicate that it is dairy. This serves as another method of permitting dairy bread, a topic that will be discussed further in future installments.

*Darchei Teshuvah* (97:33) adds that even according to the *Rema*, one may bake only

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enough dairy *challah* for the first day of *Yom Tov*. One would not be permitted to bake dairy *challah* initially for *Yom Tov Shen*i (the second day observed outside of Israel), since that exceeds the one-day limit established by the *Rema*.

This ruling is relevant in Israel this year as well. Since Shabbat immediately follows *Shavuot*, one should not bake enough dairy *challah* for both days together. If this was done, the *challah* would be prohibited unless it was made in a clearly unique and recognizable shape indicating that it is dairy.

However, as explained above, if dairy *challah* remains from the *Shavuot* meals, the leftovers may still be consumed on Shabbat.

### SUMMARY

- *Chazal* permitted making dairy bread when it qualifies as a *Davar Mu'at* (“small amount”).

- *Shulchan Aruch* defines a *Davar Mu'at* as enough bread for one meal, while the *Rema* permits enough for an entire day.
- The permissible amount depends on the number of people participating in the meal. Leftovers from such a permitted baking remain permissible.
- There is a custom to prepare dairy *challah* for *Shavuot*. Ideally, the bread should only be baked for the first day of *Yom Tov*.
- If one wishes to bake a larger amount of dairy bread, the bread should be made in a distinctive shape so that it is clearly recognizable as dairy. ■

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# The Mountain of Faith

All religion rests upon a leap of faith. Believers see the traces of Hashem in nature and history, while atheists attribute history to human decisions and nature to evolutionary forces. Faith is ultimately a choice. We choose whether to accept the traditions handed to us by our parents and teachers, and whether to see the hand of Hashem within the world around us.

What makes Judaism distinct is not that it can be proven through pure reason or rational argument. What makes it distinct is where that leap carries us. Our mesorah does not ask us to leap back to the dream of a lone mystic or to the private prophecy of a single individual claiming divine revelation. We leap back to a singular moment in history when Hashem spoke directly to an entire people assembled at the foot of Har Sinai.

We did not merely witness signs or wonders, nor did we rely upon someone else's prophecy. We heard His voice and received His word directly. Ma'amad Har Sinai cannot

be proven with certainty any more than any other faith claim can. But once we choose to trust our mesorah and return to Har Sinai, our faith rests upon direct divine revelation and not merely upon dreams, visions, or private prophecy.

Only Hashem can deliver absolute truth. Human beings live within a maze of half-truths. As much as we strive for truth, it always remains somewhat elusive. Even in our interpersonal relationships, as much as we try to be honest, we rarely expose the full truth. Tact and social etiquette require us to choose carefully what to reveal and what to withhold about others. At times, halacha itself permits, and even encourages, partial distortion of truth for the sake of darchei shalom and harmonious social interaction.

Even within our own hearts, honesty is rarely complete. We construct narratives about who we are, and those narratives are not always fully true. To some degree, we need them in order to cope with failure, disappointment, and frustration. When those self-narratives drift too far from reality, we begin living duplicitous lives. Yet most people, even those sincerely striving for honesty, still reshape parts of the truth in order to preserve a workable image of themselves.

The closest we come to absolute truth is through Torah and through commitment to His will. Truth is the foundation of our

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encounter with Hashem. As David HaMelech asks in Tehillim, “Who may reside in the tent of Hashem and who may dwell upon His holy mountain?” One who “speaks truth within his heart.” The more we strive for truth, the closer we draw to Hashem, who is the ultimate source of truth.

This is why dishonesty is treated so severely in the Torah, especially falsehood uttered under oath or within a courtroom. A legal system represents humanity’s attempt to come as close as possible to truth in order to uphold justice and moral order. False testimony harms not only the immediate victim. It undermines the fragile human effort to uncover truth itself.

Modern society is facing a crisis of truth. The internet revolutionized the manner in which we exchange information. It was assumed that free and effortless access to information would lead humanity toward greater truth. Unfortunately, the sheer volume of information and the resulting overload have made it increasingly difficult to separate fact from fiction. Social media delivered the next blow to humanity’s ability to distinguish truth from falsehood.

The internet provided a vast library of information, while social media became a cultural force shaping human perception. Algorithms further distort the search for truth. Earlier forms of the internet still required people to actively search for information. Social media constantly pushes information toward us, selecting content designed to keep our attention. Since anger, conflict, and sensationalism attract more attention than careful thought or nuance, distortion spreads more quickly than truth.

And now we stand before a tsunami that may further sabotage humanity’s ability to

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detect truth. Artificial intelligence allows for the manufacture of information, videos, images, and even human voices that can appear entirely authentic. It can generate an exponential flood of content, making the search for truth feel like searching for a needle in a thousand haystacks. We still have little understanding of where this revolution will ultimately lead or how deeply it may reshape humanity’s relationship with truth itself.

The further we drift from truth, the further we drift from Hashem. This danger is not merely social or moral; it is deeply religious.

It therefore should not surprise us, even if it is deeply frustrating, to watch our enemies weaponize falsehood against our people and our country. They fabricate bizarre myths about the way we conduct our wars and level wildly disproportionate accusations against us. Neither our country nor our army is entirely free of mistakes or wrongdoing, but

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the scale and imagery used to portray us often bear little resemblance to reality.

During the recent confrontation with Iran, this contrast became even more pronounced. Iran poured enormous resources into an endless stream of fabricated videos and manipulated images designed to conceal the scale of its actual losses on the battlefield. At times it felt as though two entirely different realities were being presented: one rooted in distortion and the other far closer to reality.

None of this is incidental. Our struggle in Eretz Yisrael is not merely about building a Jewish state. It is about bringing Hashem into this world through His people, in His Land. Those who oppose us may not articulate it in theological language, but beneath the hatred often lies a deeper resistance to the presence of Hashem within history. It is therefore not incidental that falsehood becomes one of the primary weapons used against us, while we struggle to hold firmly to truth.

Every year on Shavuot we renew that choice. We once again take that leap and return to the mountain of faith. We return not only to strengthen our emunah, but to deepen our inner religious life and reaffirm our commitment to Hashem's word and His will. Shavuot also renews our mission of bringing Hashem into a world that often refuses to believe.

That process began at Har Sinai, when

Hashem first revealed Himself to our people. We were tasked with representing His will and modeling a life of covenant and commitment. Part of that mission is to spread the truth of Hashem throughout the world. By standing up for truth and battling falsehood, we strengthen His presence within this world. ■



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# Rav Kook on Pirkei Avot 1:4 - The Ideal Way to Study Torah with Others

“Yosi ben Yoezer of Tzereidah said: Make your house a meeting place for sages. Roll in the dust of their feet and thirstily drink in their words.” (*Avot* 1:4)

The phrase, “roll in the dust of their feet” implies that one must humbly interact with rabbis when one is in their presence. Rashi takes this approach and understands “roll in the dust of their feet” as directing a student to serve the sages. He must become an aid available to him at all times.

Rav Chaim Volozhin offers a novel way to understand this phrase ‘*mitabek be’afar ragleihem*’ (roll in the dust). He compares this phrase with the verse in the Torah: “A man wrestled (*avak*) with him” (*Bereshit* 32:25), a reference to Yaakov wrestling with the angel. Thus, this term in the Mishnah, *mitabek* similar to *avak*, is teaching that we are required to ask, challenge, and debate Torah teachings

- even when learning from rabbis. At the same time, “we sit in the dust of their feet,” which means the debate must be carried out respectfully and with a recognition that we are learning from those who possess much great knowledge. (*Ruach Chaim*, 1:4).

One of the remarkable qualities of the time-honored way we study as Jews is the healthy debate which animates Torah study. We arrive at the truth when we learn from one another and sincerely evaluate the redeeming qualities in differing viewpoints. Rav Kook, in one of his celebrated teachings, comments on the phrase “The Sages increase peace in the world” (*Berachot* 64a) with the following insight:

“Some mistakenly think that world peace will come about only through uniformity of opinions and characteristics, and for that reason, when they behold sages investigating the Torah, and thereby multiplying the sides and opinions, they assume that the sages bring controversy, which is the opposite of peace. In truth, this is not so. True peace cannot come to the world other than by diversification. There must be made visible all sides and opinions, and it must be clarified how all have their place, each according to its value...” (*Olat Re’iyah*, vol. 1, pp. 330-331, translation Naor, The Koren Rav Kook Siddur, p. 267)

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another and be open-hearted and open-minded can we as a community arrive at truth which brings wholeness and peace to the world.

Rav Kook's dear friend, Rav Aryeh Levin, lovingly known as 'the *tzaddik* of Yerushalyim,' emphasized the humility needed when we study together with others. Rav Aryeh cited the beautiful teaching of the sages quoted by Rashi (*Shemot* 12:3) which depicts the way in which Moshe studied together with his brother Aharon. Rav Aryeh expounded on Rashi's words; "Moshe would lower his head and say to his brother Aharon, 'You speak first.' Aharon would then lower his head and say to Moshe, 'You speak first.' A single voice then emerged between them."

Rav Aryeh explained that Moshe could easily have thought to himself: 'If I heard the Law directly from God, why must I first hear the opinion of my brother Aharon?' And Aharon could have also had the thought in his heart: 'I am the older brother, why must I give precedence to my younger brother?' And yet, each one wanted to learn first from the other. Both displayed exquisite modesty and humility. (*R'Aryeh Haya Omer*, Raz, p. 282)

Rav Aryeh placed special emphasis on the sensitivity that must be shown to others in every area of life. This sensitivity must be carried over when studying Torah with others as well.

### A CARING SHIELD

In a similar vein, Rav Kook offered an exquisite explanation of a unique term employed to describe the Sages in the Talmud:



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*baalei tesar* (master of the shield), which refers to the sages when they are debating an issue (see *Berachot* 27b). Why does the

Talmud refer to the rabbis as "shield bearers?" Rav Kook explains that Talmudic scholars engage expressly in a defensive war - *not* a debate with an all out assault to annihilate the opposition.

Since the rabbis recognize there may be an aspect of truth in the opposition, the true scholar must primarily bolster and affirm their own position. Thus, one defends their position, the same way a shield is used for defense. A scholar never looks to demean or belittle the other. When engaged in a sincere search for truth one remains ever aware of disagreeing honorably and with deep mutual




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respect. (*Ain Aya, Berachot 27b, piska #5, p.111*)

### HARMONIZING TORAH STUDY IN THE HOLY LAND

Rav Kook believed that Torah study has been impacted negatively by the long exile. Torah study has been plagued by excessive debate and a lack of harmony among the great sages. With the return of Torah study to the sacred atmosphere of the Holy Land, Rabbis will interact more amicably and a more natural, organic flow of Torah thought and intuition will once again come to the fore.

What is the basis for Rav Kook's novel idea? A striking source found in the Talmud is the amazing episode regarding Rav Zeira. In preparation for his aliyah to the Land of Israel, he fasted one hundred fasts in order to forget his learning of the exile, so that he could learn Torah afresh in the Land of Israel. (*Bava Metzia 85a*)

What in particular did Rav Zeira intend to forget? Rashi offers the following stunning idea:

Rav Zeira wished to forget the *style* of study practiced in Babylonia. The method of study in Eretz Yisrael was one of cooperative analysis and an unargumentative search for the truth, which flowed smoothly as oil. In contrast, the Babylonian scholars of that period were accustomed to joust with each other and attempt to disprove each other without always training an eye on the objective truth. (*Rashi* according to the *Maharsha, Ben Yehoyada*, also see *Artscroll Talmud* which quotes this explanation: *Bava Metzia* p. 85a note #32) ■



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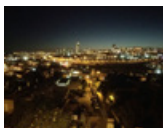


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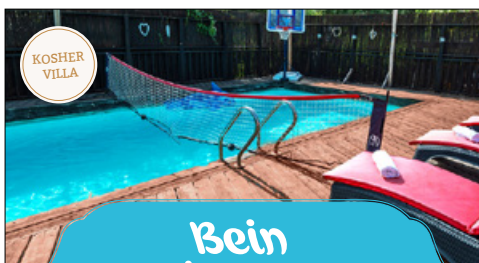
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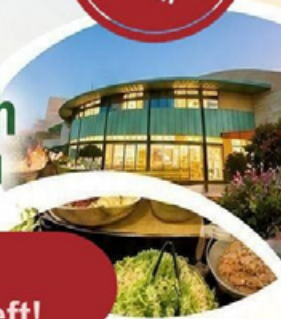


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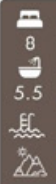


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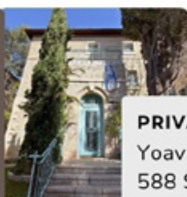

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# Different Standards of Shabbat Clothes Cleanliness

לעילוי נשמת  
 יואל אפרים בן אברהם עוזיאל זלצמן ז"ל

**Question:** On Shabbat, with our kids putting their shoes on my husband’s pants, in an Israeli climate etc., my husband’s clothes often get dusty/dirty to a degree that embarrasses me. The other week, I hit his suit firmly with my hand to remove **most** of a particularly bad patch of dirt. He said that was *assur*; I was taught otherwise. Who is right?

**Answer:** Each of you has a reasonable claim. We will explore different factors, approaches and gray areas.

Classical *libun* involves using an agent (usually, water) to remove a substance that is embedded in a fabric. Cleaning that lacks either water or absorbed substance is apt to either only violate a Rabbinic prohibition or, often, be permitted.

One of the test cases is found in Shabbat 147a. The *gemara* says that one who shakes

out his garment on Shabbat violates a Torah prohibition. Rashi explains that this refers to shaking out dirt, and Tosafot says that this could not be *libun* (due to lack of water – Ritva) but rather it must be talking about shaking out dew. The Shulchan Aruch (Orach Chayim 302:1) rules like Tosafot, but the Rama cites Rashi’s position, which includes dirt in the prohibition. Sephardi *poskim* disagree about which opinion to follow (Ohr L’Tzion II:24:1 – stringent; Yalkut Yosef (OC 302:9) – lenient), but the consensus among Ashkenazi *poskim* is that *libun* could apply to shaking off dirt (Mishna Berura 302:6).

However, the *gemara* sets conditions for violating *libun* in this case: the clothes are black and new, and one is *makpid* on their cleanliness. This is because a non-classic cleaning is forbidden only when these factors make the cleaning significant enough. The Be’ur Halacha (to 302:1) posits that there are not fully three separate conditions. Rather, when it is black and new, particularness is assumed until it is clearly missing, whereas without those objective factors, only when one is particularly *makpid* is it forbidden.

Each of the factors needs clarification. *Poskim* say that black includes other dark colors (see Shemirat Shabbat K’hilchata 15:28-29). New also likely includes something that “looks new” (*ibid.*). These qualities are hard to

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quantify, but note that, generally, most people save their best-looking clothing for Shabbat. The degree of *hakpada* is also elusive. Orchot Shabbat (13:25) describes it as whether one will go out with it without cleaning (what level of alternative existing is unclear.) Shemirat Shabbat K'hilchata (ibid.) differs slightly – he would not put it on dirty. Perhaps there is a *machloket* if he would not choose to wear it but he would not remove it once on. He adds that if one is *makpid* only because of Shabbat's honor, that is not called *makpid*.

Another factor relates to the modes of cleaning. Shemirat Shabbat K'hilchata (ibid.) says that even when it is permitted based on the above parameters, that is to bang it softly, not to shake vigorously or hit hard with a hand. In the context of removing a clump of mud (Shulchan Aruch, OC 302:7), the Be'ur Halacha (ibid.) says that it is permitted when a mark of dirt remains. He similarly argues (to 302:1) that the prohibition of shaking off dirt when one is *makpid* is only when it becomes totally clean. Some argue that in the standard case, a mark from dirt/dust will remain and yet it is still forbidden (see Dovev Meisharim I:61;

Halichot Shabbat (Lintzer) VIII:11).

A factor that is difficult to decide is whether the threshold of *hakpada* is different for the clothes' owner and the person who is cleaning (i.e., your case). The Be'ur Halacha (ibid.) leaves it as an unanswered question whether that is considered *makpid*. It is also unclear if your husband is not personally *makpid* but defers to you – does that turn him into *makpid*?

In summary, there are many opinions and factors with gray areas, and so both your claim and your husband's claim each have a reasonable basis. If you do this often, it is even possible that sometimes it is permitted and sometimes not. What your policy should be in the future is a good question that we cannot solve unequivocally. ■

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## PORTION FROM THE PORTION

RAKEL BERENBAUM  
TORAH TIDBITS CONTRIBUTOR

# The Holiday of Matan Torah - A Spiritual or Physical Holiday?

Shavuot is a holiday that seems to include two very contradictory concepts. On one hand it is the day we received the Torah from God – a very spiritual day. On the other hand it also includes many physical components which are listed below.

1) The holiday is also called Chag HaKatzir (The Harvest Festival), celebrating the produce from their hard physical work in the fields.

2) During the time of the Beit Hamikdash one of the special mitzvot of the holiday was the mitzvah of *hanafat shtei halechem* – the korban of raising the two breads. This ceremony was in order that their breads and other foods (physical objects) would be blessed and be bountiful.

3) The *korban* of the *Shtei Halechem* is also called *Mincha Chadasha* - a new *mincha* sacrifice. While all other *mincha* sacrifices must not be *chametz* – this one, brought on

Shavuot, is actually supposed to be *chametz*. *Chametz* is usually connected to the physical aspects of man.

4) During the time of the *Beit Hamikdash Shavuot* was when people began bringing *bikurim* – first fruits to the *Mikdash*. Again, most *korbanot* must not include honey or leavening - *dvash* or *seor* which are actually brought in the *Bikurim* (“honey” from the dates).

5) It is a judgment day for fruits - (physical blessings).

6) In the Torah there are two seemingly contradictory verses related to *Azeret*, another name for Shavuot. One says “*Azeret l’Hashem Elokecha* – the holiday of *Azeret* is for **God**” (Dvarim 16:8) and “*Azeret Tehiye Lachem* – the holiday of *Azeret* is for **you**.” (Bamidbar 29:8). Are we supposed to celebrate *Azeret* by only doing spiritual things for God – davening, learning Torah, all day and night- which would seem appropriate for such an auspicious day as the giving of the Torah? Or are we supposed to spend the time doing things for ourselves as well– like eating and drinking festive foods? The *Gemara* (*Psachim* 58:2) says that whereas with the other holidays there is a dispute whether they are all for God or part for God and part for us – all agree that related to *Azeret* it is 50-50. It is not meant to be a day

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like Yom Kippur –only spirituality. Why so?

The Torah was given to humans - as it says in *Berachot* ( 25:2) "*Lo nitna Torah lmalacehi hasharet* – the Torah wasn't given to angels". The spiritual Torah was given to us to teach us how to live in this physical world. That's why the holiday has those two names "*Chag matan Torah*" – spiritual, and "*Chag Hakatzir*" – physical. We are not meant to live like hermits removing ourselves from the world around us. The *Torah* helps us bring the spiritual into the physical world that we live in. Half the day for *Hashem* and half the day for us to celebrate our receiving the *Torah* and its *mitzvot* while eating, drinking, singing, and rejoicing. The Torah was given and is continuously given to us humans. Let us enjoy this amazing present. Chag Sameach!



Sorry to disappoint all those who wanted another new cheese cake recipe for Shavuot – this year I decided to include a cute meaty recipe instead. This is an easy, yummy dish that comes out looking like the small modest mountain where God gave us the Torah. Chag Sameach.

#### HAR SINAI MEAT AND POTATOES

- 1/2 kilo ground chicken, turkey or meat
- 1-3 tsp Cumin
- tsp Pepper

- 1-3 tsp Garlic
- Salt, to taste
- Olive oil
- 8 small potatoes, peeled and cooked
- Paprika
- Parsley

Combine the first 5 ingredients to form one mixture. If you like things spicy add more spices – less spicy if you like it less spicy. Mix well. Spread out on a baking sheet. Spray with olive oil. Bake at 200 for 15-25 minutes or until done. Take out and cool. Slice into small rectangles. (These meat sticks can be made ahead and frozen). Arrange the cooked potatoes on a flat baking dish. Sprinkle with a bit of paprika and parsley ( the flowers of the Har Sinai potato). Lay two of the meat sticks on top of each potato. You can attach them upright with a toothpick or skewer if you prefer. Spray with a bit of oil on top. Serve hot. Have fun with this recipe – let the kids come up with their own additions. ■

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**SHOSHANA JUDELMAN**

TORAH TIDBITS CONTRIBUTOR

# Opening the Door to the Light of the Aleph-Bet

On our trips to Poland, we usually begin at the Warsaw Jewish Cemetery. When I call this cemetery one of my favorite places in the world, people give me strange looks. But I am a historian and a person who is constantly seeking connection with Am Yisrael and, with that goal in mind, the Warsaw Jewish Cemetery is almost unparalleled. You can walk in any direction and find a treasure trove of great personalities and stories going back almost 10 generations. Communal leaders, artists, teachers, writers, Rebbes and many many more. It is awesome and inspiring.

On my last journey, we entered a recently renovated ohel. Since I had never been in it, I was very curious.

When we got there, we saw that there was a keypad lock on the door. As in many places across Europe, the code for the lock was a Hebrew word that had to be converted to its numerical counterpart using gematria.

I love these locks.

Whenever I encounter them, it touches something very deep inside of me. I feel like an explorer receiving a secret handshake from another Jew across space and time. It gives me a sense of belonging and heritage. The feeling of being part of something bigger than myself.

And huge gratitude for my Jewish education.

Aside from the “codebreaker” aspect, the force of the Hebrew letters is what makes this experience so powerful.

Kabbalah understands the Hebrew letters as portals of connection and channels of energy. Aside from the sound associated with each letter, there are countless layers to engage with – physical shape, numerical value, name, and so on. Each facet is a lens to deeper understanding of words, concepts, personal names, pesukim, etc.

Chazal teach us that through 10 Utterances the world was created and the Baal Shem Tov explains that those same words are still being “said” by Hashem to continue bringing the world into existence. In other words, the Aleph-Bet letters are the building blocks of Creation and powerful tools of attachment to Hashem.

In a talk from 1992, the Lubavitcher Rebbe said that the Hebrew letters are the

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mechanism through which Bnei Yisrael receives the flow of blessings from Hashem. He references a pasuk in Parashat VaYechi in which Yaakov Avinu blesses Ephraim and Menashe. The Torah says:

וַיְבָרֶכֶם בַּיּוֹם הַהוּא לְאִמּוֹר בְּכֶּךָ יִשְׂרָאֵל

And he blessed them that day saying, “through **you** will Israel be blessed”

The Rebbe points out that בך has the gematria of 22, referring to the 22 letters of the Aleph-Bet. And he makes the point even stronger by citing the Zohar that אור־יִתָּא וְקוּדְשָׁא אור־יִתָּא וְקוּדְשָׁא, Hashem and His Torah are one. In other words, the very essence of Hashem shines through the Hebrew letters of the Torah into Am Yisrael whenever we engage with them.

Entering that ohel shifted the energy of the group.

The code, after all, was ישועה.

A small word charged with many connotations: salvation, rescue, help, and Geulah.

Using the Hebrew letters didn't only enable us to open a door in Warsaw, they empowered us to open a channel in our hearts. Hashem's light shining through the letters effected an atmosphere of possibility, hope, and love. And our davening in that ohel was a gateway for the whole journey.

This Shavuot, may we be blessed to recognize the precious gift Hashem is giving us, to meet the Torah with renewed love, and to open our hearts to His healing light shining through every letter. ■

**Shoshana Judelman** is passionate about learning and growing through Chassidus. She gives shiurim to women in many communities around Israel, including Efrat, Elazar, Raanana and Jerusalem as well as at Midreshet Rachel V'Chaya. Shoshana also guides groups at Yad Vashem and leads journeys to Poland and other countries around Europe for JRoots.

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Michal Silverstein, MS

# Is Therapy Needed?

**Question:** My child is acting up and I'm feeling lost when it comes to parenting. Should I go to parenting classes/counseling or does my child need therapy?

The world of therapy can be overwhelming and confusing to navigate. I will try to clarify the distinctions between the therapies/services and discuss what type is most effective when managing different parenting situations.

Parenting classes, usually in a group setting, are recommended for parents at any stage. They provide general parenting tools and strategies related to discipline, communication skills and managing daily routines. Parenting classes also provide basic information on normal child development. Parents can gain confidence, knowledge and direction from these classes which helps to create a stable home environment.

When parents feel that their problems are consistently overwhelming or they feel stuck, it may be a good idea to seek private one on one parenting guidance or counseling. This is when a professional provides tailored guidance based on your family's needs. Parents may seek parenting guidance when they notice negative patterns in the family that repeat themselves and feel hopeless or at a loss for what to do. The counseling process allows parents to reflect on their past experiences and what they bring to the parent child relationship. With professional

guidance, parents can decide what patterns and parenting styles they'd like to hold onto or develop and what they'd like to discard. Parents become empowered and more mindful about their parenting choices and create new, healthier patterns.

Parenting guidance is also helpful when a parent is triggered by a specific child's behavior and gets into repeated power struggles with that child and resentment builds. Parents learn how to tolerate behaviors, set boundaries and reduce conflict. They also develop a communication style that's effective in building a positive relationship and connection with that child.

Change in the home begins with the parent/s. Many times lack of boundaries, chaos and constant negative cycles can be remedied by parents seeking counseling. This tends to trickle down to the children and things many times fall into place. Families can definitely benefit and get back on track when parents seek help and apply consistent parenting skills.

When a child suffers from anxiety, depression, o.c.d, fears, etc, he may need more individual support. The child can benefit from one on one therapy sessions where he can express his complex feelings in a safe space guided by a skilled professional. Even if parents have great parenting skills, when a child has a chemical imbalance or struggles with emotional distress, it may not be enough.

Parents can set the tone in the home and have a good rhythm but when you have a child who can't or won't follow the rules, then he may need more support in the form of one on one sessions. Usually the combination of parenting counseling and individual therapy for the struggling child is a winning combination.

Be'hatzlacha ■

**Michal Silverstein** has a MS in educational psychology and counseling. She facilitates parenting workshops in and around Jerusalem and maintains a private practice.

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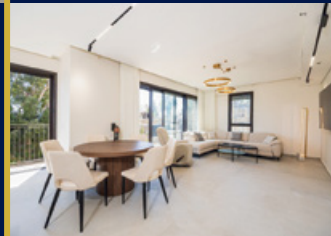
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# Megilat Ruth: When We Don't Leave It to Chance

לעילוי נשמת  
 מאיר יצחק בן יוסף אליהו הכהן ז"ל

On Shavuot we celebrate the “marriage” between Hashem and Am Yisrael. We wear white, we stand as Hashem’s beloved bride, and we relive a moment of deep connection, commitment, and destiny.

And yet the book we read on this day does not tell the story of Har Sinai. It tells the story of a widow.

Megilat Ruth centers on a woman who lost her husband, her stability, and her future as she imagined it. And at the heart of the story stands Naomi, her mother-in-law, who takes responsibility to ensure that Ruth does not remain alone. Naomi does not say, “You have suffered enough, now just survive.” She does

not wait passively for something to happen. She guides Ruth, encourages her, and actively pushes her toward building a new home.

Helping people get married is not presented as a side detail in our tradition. It is part of the story we read on the day we celebrate our own bond with Hashem.

We see this same idea in the world of shidduchim today. When the community decides to care, things move. When people take responsibility for others, things that were not happening begin to happen.

Recently, through Shagririm Balev, a shidduch came together that many people would have assumed “someone must have already suggested this.”

This is couple number 518: Miriam and Ofek. Miriam is the widow of Ori Shani HY”D,

who fell in the battles of October 7th. Ofek was Ori’s commander. They had shared circles and many natural points of connection, and on paper it feels like a match that could easily have been made earlier.

But in reality, nothing moved forward until Rachel Flesher, an experienced ambassador, opened her mind to the possibility and simply made the introduction. She didn’t even know at first that he had been Ori’s commander.

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This story is not shared to suggest that attention in Shidduchim should be focused on one group instead of another. Rather, this story highlights something else: how much the community is capable of when people put their minds and hearts into helping others to marry.

Megilat Ruth reminds us that matchmaking is not only logistics. From Ruth and Boaz came David HaMelech, the beginning of Malchut Beit David and the unfolding of geulah. When we help Hashem bring shidduchim together, we are not only helping one couple build a home, we are taking part in building the future of Am Yisrael.

On Shavuot, as we stand dressed like brides, we are reminded that being part of Am Yisrael means caring deeply about who gets to build a bayit within it.

When we read about Naomi guiding Ruth, we are reading about what we can be for one another. A small nudge, a conversation, a suggestion, can change the course of someone's life. We never know how much Geula is going to come from this one family we helped create. ■

♥

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# TORAH 4 TEENS

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### TRUE PEACE

In Parshat Naso, the Torah presents a wide range of seemingly unrelated topics, and in the center of it all is Birkat Kohanim. Rav Jonathan Sacks, in his article “The Pursuit of Peace,” explains that the placement of these blessings is not accidental. The final words of the blessing, “May Hashem lift His face toward you and grant you peace,” are key to understanding the entire parsha.

Rav Sacks explains that peace in Judaism is more than the absence of conflict. True peace is harmony: a state in which different people, roles, and ideas are able to exist together with mutual respect. The Torah recognizes that human beings are naturally different, and that those differences can easily lead to jealousy, resentment, or division. The challenge is to create a society in which every person feels valued and included.

Each section of the parsha reflects this

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idea. The Sotah ritual seeks to restore peace between husband and wife. The detailed repetition of the princes’ offerings teaches the importance of giving honor and recognition to every tribe equally. The Levitical families are each assigned their own meaningful role, while the Nazirite allows an ordinary person to aspire to greater holiness. Together, these laws create a framework for harmony within the nation.

Parshat Naso teaches us that peace is not something we simply hope for, it is something we must actively build through respect, sensitivity, and care for one another every day. According to the Rambam, it is for this purpose that the whole Torah was given: to create peace in the world.

As we transition from the beautiful holiday of Shavuot, when we receive the Torah, into the holiness of Shabbat, may we remember to continue the work of the final bracha of Birkat Kohanim. Shabbat Shalom!



**CHANA KENTON**  
**11<sup>TH</sup> GRADE, NEVE DANIEL**

### NOT OUR GIFTS, ONLY OUR CHOICES

The parsha introduces the laws of compensation and teshuvah with the words “When a man or woman sins...”. Bamidbar Rabbah states that “a man or woman” refers to tzadikim, “whom God loves,” because unlike the Kohanim and Leviim, whose status is a birthright, tzadikim are defined by an active choice to follow God. Although their situation is not

ideal, they are on a path of improvement.

Converts are described as those “whom God especially loves.” Why is this so? Bamidbar Rabbah brings a metaphor: A gazelle joined the king’s flock of sheep, and when asked why he favored it, he explained that although the sheep behave just as well as the gazelle, they are only acting on instinct, while the gazelle went against its nature to join the king’s flock.

A person’s value is not in their gifts; it is in how they apply them. When we act within our comfort zone, even if it is a good place, we remain static. Possessing a good quality can feel like success, but progress only happens when we use and develop it.

Later in the parsha, in Birkat Kohanim, we see an emphasis on personal growth over societal hierarchy.

Bamidbar Rabbah discusses the thoughts of a non-Kohen, who may feel that because of his lower status, he will not receive the same blessings. His answer lies in the verse: “When you eat the labor of your hands... it is good for you in this world and the next.” Our merit is in our work. It is earned. A Kohen and a non-Kohen have different roles, but they can both receive equal reward for reaching their unique potential.

Rabbi Sacks speaks about the right way to compliment a person. We should applaud not perfection, but effort. When people receive

positive feedback for things out of their control, such as beauty or talent, it creates a fear of failure. However, celebrating a person’s effort to become a new version of themselves, even if incomplete, motivates them to keep trying and keep moving toward the goalpost of their life’s mission.

“A righteous person cannot stand in the place of someone who has done teshuvah.” A person’s position is not what defines them; it is the distance they have traveled to arrive there.

Hashem is infinite and does not need quantitative measures of success to see how far we have come. The only true benchmark for progress is who we were yesterday. May we all merit to be the tzadikim described in Parshat Naso, who are not handed greatness on a silver platter, but choose, struggle, grow, and transform themselves in their journey toward Hashem. ■

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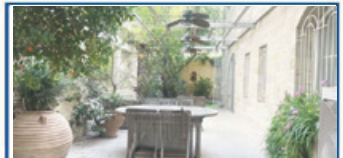
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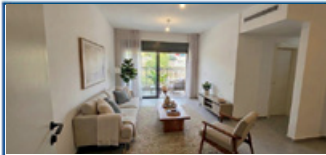
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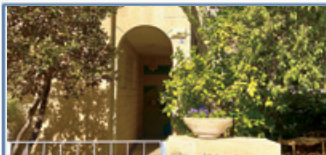
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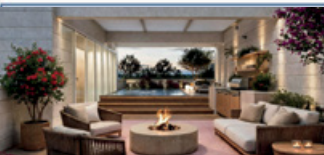
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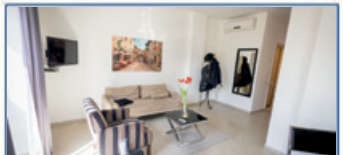
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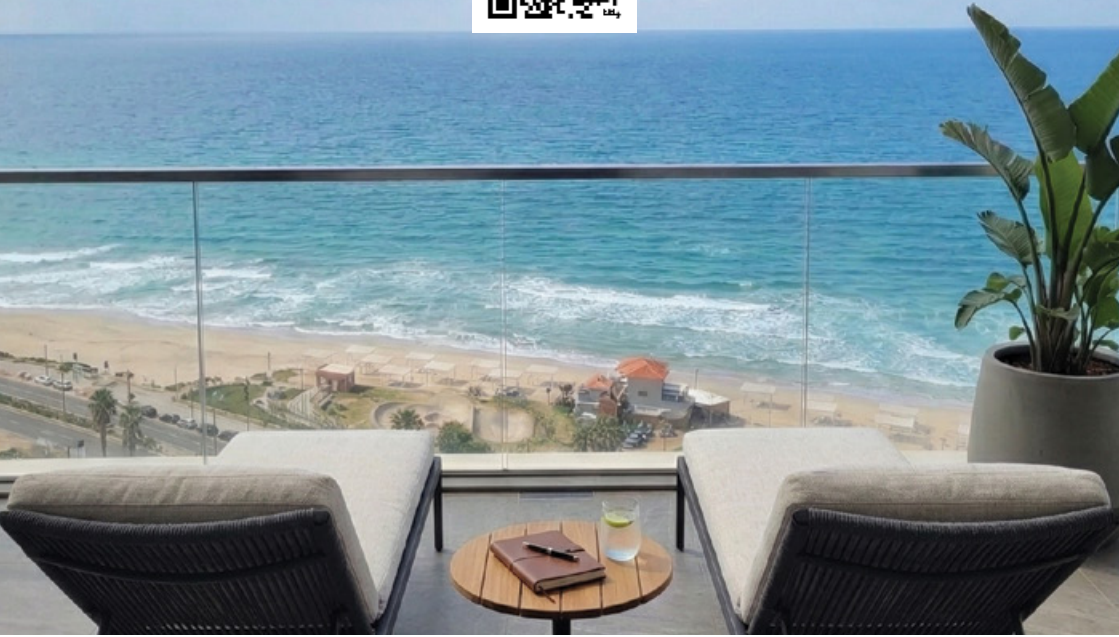
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