

א ביסל תורה!

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ה' סיון תשפ"ה · שבועות

What Day is שבועות On?

By Nessa Jaffe '27

We all celebrate שבועות as the holiday on which the תורה was given. However, the תורה never actually says that שבועות is the day that the תורה was given, nor does it say the date that the תורה was given at all. In fact, there is actually a debate in the גמרא about which date the תורה was given on. The only information we get about the dates surrounding the giving of the תורה is in שמות י"ט:א, where it says: *בַּחֹדֶשׁ הַשְּׁלִישִׁי לְצֵאת בְּנֵי־יִשְׂרָאֵל מֵאֶרֶץ מִצְרָיִם בְּיָמֵם הָאֵלֶּה* "בָּאוּ מִדְבַּר סִינַי" "In the third month from when the Jews left the land of Egypt (סיון), on this day (beginning of the month), they came to the desert of סיני." Everyone agrees that the תורה was given on שבת, but what they do not agree on is which day of the week ראש חודש was. רבי יוסי (שבת פו:) thinks that ראש חודש was on the first day of the week (Sunday), whereas the sages think that ראש חודש was on the second day of the week (Monday).

Between ראש חודש and the giving of the תורה, משה goes up and down the mountain a few times. רש"י says that every time משה went up to the mountain it was early in the morning. This means that every time he went up the mountain it was a new day. Therefore, both the sages and רבי יוסי agree that משה went up the mountain for the first time on the second day of the month, and went up the second time on the third day of the month. This means that the fourth day was when משה went up for the third time and commanded the Jews *וְקִדְשְׁתֶּם הַיּוֹם*

"to prepare themselves today and tomorrow" (שמות י"ט:י), in order to be ready for the third day (on which the תורה would be given). Since this commandment was given on the fourth day of the month this means that the third day would be the sixth day of the month. The only problem is that according to רבי יוסי, the תורה was given on the seventh day of the month, so how does this make sense? רבי יוסי says that משה decided to add a third day of getting ready, and Hashem agreed.

The מגן אברהם thinks that we follow רבי יוסי and say that the תורה was given on the 7th day of the month, but this poses a question. If the תורה was given on the 7th day of סיון then why do we celebrate שבועות as on the 6th, and refer to it as זמן מתן תורתנו, the time when we received the תורה? The מגן אברהם has a really interesting answer. He says that this is a hint to the second day of יום טוב in the diaspora. Outside of ארץ ישראל we keep two days of יום טוב, and this means that our שבועות is on both the 6th day of the month and the 7th day of the month!

When commenting on what *"בְּיָמֵם הָאֵלֶּה"* means in *"בְּיָמֵם"* רש"י asks an interesting question. If *"בְּיָמֵם"* just means ראש חודש then why say *"בְּיָמֵם הָאֵלֶּה"* at all, why not just say ראש חודש, or the first of the month. רש"י answers that when we learn תורה we should always feel as if it was given on this day, we should feel every single day as though it is something new.

The Essence of שבועות

By Ariel Jesselsohn '26

When the תורה describes the שבועות in חג השבועות, the only time it mentions a date it says the following: וקראתם בַּעֲצָם הַיּוֹם הַזֶּה מִקְרָא-קֹדֶשׁ יְהִיָּה לָכֶם כָּל-מִלְאכָת עֲבֹדָה לֹא תַעֲשׂוּ חֻקֵּת עוֹלָם בְּכָל-מוֹשְׁבֵי-תִיכֶם לְדֹרֹתֵיכֶם “and you shall call on this very day, it shall be a holy occasion for you, all work you shall not do, this is a law forever, in all your dwellings, for generations” (ויקרא כ"ג:א). No specific day for celebration is mentioned by שבועות; the only information we get is “הַיּוֹם הַזֶּה” “on this very day.” The holiday of שבועות is unique in this sense, in that with regard to all the other holidays, the תורה lists a specific date. פסח is to be celebrated on the 15th of the first month (ניסן), סוכות on the 15th of the seventh month (תשרי), etc. However, שבועות is not given any date. But we know that שבועות is always on the 6th of סיון, so why did the תורה not say this outright? The מפרשים try to answer explain this discrepancy.

חזקוני gives a technical and הלכה based answer. On the פסוק above, חזקוני explains that if the תורה had given us a set date for שבועות, we would not count the 49 days leading up to שבועות, which are partly to know when to celebrate שבועות; instead we would just rely on the date given to us and celebrate שבועות when that day comes. However, ספירת העומר is an essential part to the holiday of שבועות and it is an important מצוה in and of itself. Therefore, if we were to be lazy with the

counting and simply rely on the date given to us, it would be terrible. Hashem knew the negative effects of placing the date of שבועות in the תורה so He decided to omit it.

The בלי יקר, Rabbi Shlomo Ephraim Luntschitz, asks a similar question to the one above. He asks the following: if the main purpose of שבועות is to celebrate תורה, מתן תורה, why does the תורה not mention מתן תורה at all when describing the holiday of שבועות? The בלי יקר presents a deep and quite didactic explanation. He answers that Hashem did not want to characterize שבועות as the day the תורה was given because that would have wrongly given מתן תורה the reputation of a simply a historical event. This explanation can likewise be extended to the first question put forward: Hashem did not want to give the holiday of שבועות a specific date because that would have limited מתן תורה to a day on the calendar that happened many years ago, but we still commemorate it today. According to the בלי יקר that is not all what מתן תורה is about. Every day when one learns תורה, one comes up with so many new insights and has new realizations that it is as though the תורה was given to them at that very moment. The עירובין נד in גמרא says that תורה is compared to figs because just as when one eats figs they discover a new sweet taste each time, so too when one learns תורה they find something sweet and new. Furthermore, when one learns תורה they should feel so much joy as if the תורה is a brand new gift. Whenever one opens a ספר they are experiencing מתן תורה in the same way our

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ancestors did at סניי millennia ago. Therefore, it is not fit to constrict מתן תורה to a day in history because that is not the truth. This idea is also found in one of רש"י's comments by שמע. In the second paragraph of שמע we say: "אם-שמע תשמעו אל-מצותי אשר אנכי מצוה אתכם היום" "if you listen to My commandments that I am commanding you today" (דברים י"א:ג). There is a problem with this because how does the פסוק say that Hashem commanded the מצוות on that day even though He clearly did not; the Jews were given the תורה in יתרו פרשת whereas the second paragraph of שמע is located much later in פרשת. To resolve this conflict רש"י explains that here is telling the Jews that everyday they should feel as if the תורה was given to them anew. The כלי יקר also explains that for this very reason on שבועות the תורה tells us to bring a "מנחת חדשה" (במדבר כ"ח:כ"ו) "a new flour offering" because the תורה should feel new every single day.

מתן תורה was not a one time event; it is something we experience every single day. This idea of the כלי יקר is what the holiday of שבועות is all about. We are meant to take the inspiration of מתן תורה and apply it to our everyday lives. After we celebrate שבועות, we should all realize the importance of every second that we learn תורה, and hope that this will elevate our learning experience. But if you stay up all night on שבועות to learn and think that this learning is extra special because it is the day of מתן תורה, you have received the wrong message. The learning you do during this night is the same exact learning that

you do throughout the rest of your life. However, if you take the time internalize the message of the כלי יקר while you learn on שבועות night, it can impact you for the rest of your life.

Learning All Night

By Eitan Orkaby '27

This year, as in other years, many have the custom to stay up the entire night of שבועות learning תורה. This is a nice custom, as it gives people the opportunity to learn longer than they otherwise would have in a day. The question is, however, where does the custom come from? Is there any actual הלכה in having to stay up all night learning?

To answer the first question we first must look at the days which lead up to שבועות. The תורה says that one must count these 49 days, "וּסְפַרְתֶּם לָכֶם... שִׁבְעָה שָׁבָתוֹת תְּמִימַת תְּהִי יְנֵהּ: וּקְרָא" "and you shall count for you...seven weeks; they shall be complete" (ויקרא). During these days there is a custom to work on oneself in one way, everyday. This is an opinion held by the זוהר in his commentary on פרשת אמר. The זוהר furthers this by saying that the last, or 50th, day should be the climax of improvement, meaning something special has to be done. He suggests תורה learning on this special night. If this were the main reason then it would seem that one who failed to count all of the night leading up to שבועות should not do

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anything special. Since they never reached that pinnacle of spirituality, there is nothing abnormally special about the 50th day. One could say, however, that as the rest of בני ישראל were able to complete the 49 days, one should rejoice with them. And as this is the case, how could one not stay up the entire night rejoicing in Hashem's תורה.

To answer the second question is a little bit more complicated. There is an idea called ביטול תורה, wasted תורה time, which can be a problem in many instances. One of those includes not taking care of one's body, which takes away from one's ability to learn תורה. Sleep is a big factor in being able to properly function, therefore, if one does not get enough sleep it could cause a ביטול תורה. By this idea one would not be allowed to stay up all night to learn, as it will affect their learning for the next day, if not next week. One, therefore, has to look at the exact wording used when describing those who should stay up learning. The זוהר specifically mentions חסידים, ones who want to become especially close to Hashem, as they should stay up all night learning. Someone on that level might still be affected by lack of sleep, but will take so much out of the night of learning that it is worth it.

To explain why one should stay up the entire night the הלכה פניני (מועדים י"ג:ח) gives another reason. He explains שבועות as the wedding between בני ישראל and Hashem. Just as a couple finally becomes one have more alone time with

each other, so too is the learning on שבועות night. We have the privilege to be alone with Hashem and connect with Him on a whole new level. The הלכה acknowledges the fact that this custom once was only practiced by חסידים but now many practice it. He warns, however, to not delve into any topics that are not related to תורה, as this then ruins the whole idea of trying to connect with Hashem.

At the end of the day each person should look at themselves to see if they would benefit greatly from staying up learning all night, or if it would ruin their learning for the rest of the week. While learning all night is a nice custom there is no הלכה that one should, just a nice idea if people feel that they might be able to connect with Hashem on a deeper level. Whatever the decision, one should always make sure that it is לשם שמיים, for the sake of Heaven.

תשובה ותורה נברא לפני בריאת העולם

מאת רועה הכהן '27

במדרש תנחומא (נשא, סימן ח') נאמר: "כך שנו רבותינו: שבעה דברים קדמו לעולם, ואלו הן: כסא הכבוד, והתורה, ובית המקדש, ואבות העולם, וישראל, ושימו של משיח, והתשובה... תשובה מניין? שנאמר: 'בטרם הרים יולדו' וכתוב: 'תשב אנוש עד דכא ותאמר שובו בני אדם' (תהלים צ'). וכאן עולה שאלה גדולה: אם עדיין לא נברא העולם, לא היה אדם ולא חטא – איך ייתכן שהייתה כבר "תשובה"? למה צריך "תשובה" לפני שיש חטא?

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מחזירים. כי חיים שאינם נעים, מתפתחים, טועים ושבים – אינם חיים כלל. אדם שלא חוטא – הוא אדם שלא פעל, שלא ניסה, שלא התמסר.

זו הסיבה שבגללה גם הנזיר, שהתנזר מן היין כדי להתרחק מחטא, נדרש להביא **קרבן חטאת** (במדבר ו', יא). כי התשובה האמיתית אינה להתרחק מהחיים – אלא להיכנס לתוכם ולגלות בהם את הדרך לשוב. וזה, לפי הרב קוק, בדיוק מה שהתשובה עושה: **"התשובה מתקנת את הקלקול ומחזירה את העולם ואת החיים למקורו, דווקא בגילוי יסוד עצמיותם העליון – עולם החירות."**

וכך, המדרש שאומר שתשובה קדמה לעולם – אינו עוסק רק בסדר זמנים, אלא גם בסדר מהויות.

לפני שהיה העולם, לפני שהיה חטא – הייתה תשובה. ולכן, בשורה התחתונה: **עד שלא היה עולם, הנפש של ה' לא הייתה שלמה. כי בלי חיים אין תורה, והתורה היא הנפש של ה', והתשובה באה יחד עם הקיום של החיים.**



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כדי להבין זאת, צריך אולי להפוך את נקודת המבט ולנסות להבין מחדש מה זה תשובה. המדרש בבראשית רבה (א', א') נותן לנו תשתית חשיבתית לכך: **"בנהג שבעולם מלך בשר ודם בונה פלטין, אינו בונה אותה מדעת עצמו אלא מדעת אדריכל... כך היה הקב"ה מביט בתורה ובורא את העולם."** וכפי שדורשים חז"ל (שם): **"אין ראשית אלא תורה, שנאמר 'ה' קנני ראשית דרכו'" (משלי ח', כב).** התורה, אם כן, קודמת לעולם. היא לא רק ספר ההוראות של החיים – היא התכנית הפנימית של הבריאה כולה. העולם עצמו הוא התורה.

הגמרא במסכת שבת (קד ע"א) דורשת על המילה הראשונה בעשרת הדיברות – "אנכי": **"רבי יוחנן אמר: אנכי – נוטריקון: אנא נפשי כתבית יהבית."** כלומר: "אני את הנפש שלי כתבתי ונתתי לכם". התורה איננה חפץ זר מאולקים – היא הנפש של ה'. היא עצם מהותו שבאה לידי ביטוי בעולם. ומכאן: העולם עצמו – שהוא המקום שבו התורה יכולה להופיע ולהתקיים – הוא גם המקום שבו נפש ה' באה לידי גילוי. אבל כדי שזה יקרה, נדרשת תשובה.

ולמה? כי העולם איננו מקום של שלמות קבועה, אלא של תנועה. אדם נברא בתנועה. החיים הם בתנועה. וכפי שאומר שלמה המלך: **"כי אין אדם צדיק בארץ אשר יעשה טוב ולא יחטא"** (קהלת ז', כ). וכאן באה קריאתו העמוקה של הרב קוק (אורות התשובה, ו'): **"התשובה קדמה לעולם ולפיכך היא יסוד העולם. שלמותם של החיים היא דווקא עם המשך התגלותם על פי טבעם העצמי... ואין אדם צדיק בארץ אשר יעשה טוב ולא יחטא. וביטול עצם טבעיותם של החיים, כדי שהאדם יהיה בלתי-חוטא – זהו עצמו החטא היותר גדול."**

זו תפיסה מהפכנית: הרב קוק מבין מכך שהתשובה קדמה לעולם שהעולם כולו בנוי על התשובה, העולם זקוק לתשובה. הוא מסביר שהחיים מושלמים כשהם בתנועה, כשהם

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