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INTERNET PARSHA SHEET ON BAMIDBAR - SHAVUOS - 5776

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The Individual and the Community **Rabbi Eliakim Koenigsberg**

In Parshas Bamidbar the Jewish people are counted by toldosam, l'mishpechosam, l'veis avosam, b'mispar sheimos - each shevet, each family, each individual. After the Torah enumerates each of the shevatim, it then gives the sum total of all of them. Why does the Torah have to be so lengthy, to repeat the same formula for each shevet over and over again? And why does it have to give the sum total at the end?

Rashi writes at the beginning of Parshas Shemos that Klal Yisrael is compared to the stars, about which the possuk says, "Hamotzi b'mispar tze'va'am, l'chulam b'shem yikra - He brings forth their hosts by number; He calls each of them by name" (Yeshaya 40, 25.) There are billions of stars in the universe, but Hashem calls each one by its own name because each one has a specific purpose. The same is true with Klal Yisrael. While Hashem counts the entire Jewish people as one large group, He also counts each individual because He cares about each and every Jew. He values each one; He cherishes each one. No one is just a number. Every Jew has a special name because each one has a unique role to play in this world.

"Do not belittle any person...because there is no one who does not have his time" (Avos 4:3.) The mishna teaches that we should treat every person with respect because everyone has something to contribute to the world; every person has his moment to shine (Tiferes Yisrael). But at the same time, it is important for each individual to realize that standing alone diminishes one's effectiveness to accomplish. This could be what Hillel meant when he said, "If I will not care for myself, then who will care for me; but by myself, what am I worth?" (Avos 1:14.) While every individual certainly has value, when

he is part of a tzibbur his value increases exponentially because together with others, he can achieve so much more.

In Parshas Bamidbar the Torah counts the Jewish people b'mispar sheimos. It counts each shevet one by one to show how much Hashem cares about the sheim - the special name - of each and every individual. But then it gives the sum total, the mispar, of all the Bnei Yisrael, to demonstrate that the whole is greater than the sum of its parts because when all the individuals of Klal Yisrael join together, they can accomplish so much more as a community.

This perhaps is one reason why Parshas Bamidbar is always read before Shavuos, to highlight the idea that talmud Torah is for every individual, not just for a select few. But in order for each individual to accomplish the most in his Torah learning, he should not study alone. Rather, he should learn together with others (Berachos 63b).

We say at the end of the shemoneh esrei, "V'sein chelkainu b'sorasecha." We ask that we be given our own special portion in Torah. But only by learning together with others will we maximize our accomplishments in Torah and achieve our full potential.

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Rabbi Reisman - Parshas Bamidbar - Shavuos 5773

1. I would like to start with a Yesod Chashuv for Kabbalas Hatorah, for Shavuos and then move on to a thought or two on the Parsha. Regarding Kabbalas Hatorah it is interesting that we find a language of Amida (of standing) numerous times in regards to Kabbalas Hatorah. We find in Devarim 4:11 (ותקרבון ותעמדון) or the Posuk before in 4:10 (יום, אשר עמדת לפני). In Parshas Yisro we find in 19:17 (ויתנצבו, בתחתית ההר) or in 20:15 (ויעמדו מרחוק) and so on. We find constantly the Language of Amida, of standing which seems to be incidental to Kabbalas Hatorah. We don't really use the Lashon of Amida for incidents that take place in general. Here we refer to Kabbalas Hatorah as Mamid Har Sinai, we remember (יום, אשר עמדת לפני). Certainly the stress on the word Amidah needs explanation.

On the other hand, it is interesting that B'chol Hatorah Kula we find that when someone has Gilui Shechina we find that the person is unable to stand. In Parshas Shmini we find in 9:24 (ותאכל על-המזבחה, את-, ותצא אש) מלפני ירוך, ותאכל על-המזבחה, את-, ותצא אש). We find constantly that when there is Gilui Shechina like by Parshas Meraglim for example, when there is Gilui Shechina it says people are falling on their face, they are falling down unable to stand. We find for example by Eliyahu at Har Hacarmel when Klal Yisrael see the great fire as it says in Melachim I 18:39 (וירא, כל-, ירוך הוא האלקים). Even by Kabbalas Nevua by Bilam it says in 24:4 (ויהיו עינים נפל) That he was someone who fell. We find by Shaul when he gets Nevuah that he doesn't have any energy to stand. He falls down. In general Nevuah comes to someone who is in a horizontal position. This needs an explanation. Why is standing at Har Sinai so important. Then to contrast that with all other times that there is Gilui Shechina.

Rav Schwab in Parshas Vaeschanan in his Sefer Mayan Bais Hashoeva page # 388 (and was said over in part Parshas Vaeschanan 5772) explains that on the contrary Mattan Torah is special because it was an occasion of Limud Hatorah. The Gilui Hashchina was the Ikkur for Limud. By Limud Hatorah we find that Amida is the Ikkur.

We find that the Gemara in Maseches Megilla 21a (7 lines from the bottom) says (מימות משה ועד רבן גמליאל לא היו למדין תורה אלא מעומד משמת רבן גמליאל ת"ר) חולי (לעולם יהיו למדין תורה מיושב ירד חולי) that until the generations got weaker Jews always stood when they learned.

I would like to add a bit to Rav Schwab's explanation. We find that we serve HKB"H in two ways. One is through Bittul to the Ribbono Shel Olam, being Mivateil ourselves to HKB"H. The other is through D'veykus to the Ribbono Shel Olam, connecting ourselves. When a Navi gets Nevuah we call that Bittul Hahergeishim. When all Gashmiyus feelings leave him because he

becomes Battul so to speak Klapei the Shechina which is now speaking to him. The Navi's Nevuah is called Masa, a weight or a burden. This is because of the great burden of Nevua a person who is not a Navi is unable to stand and he falls on his face. The same thing of someone who goes to Daven. Someone who Davens an Ehrliche Davening. He feels a Hergesh, a feeling of being Mivateil himself to the Borei Olam. The idea of being Mivateil oneself to HKB"H. By Limud Hatorah it is not that way. By Limud Hatorah a person has to be a Gavra, a person has to see himself as an important person. Even though we know that our thoughts in learning pale in comparison to the Gedolim of a generation ago. Certainly pale in comparison to the understanding of Torah of Rishonim. Who can speak about Amoraim and Tannaim. We know that our Darga is a much lower Darga. Nevertheless when we learn, we are obligated to apply ourselves, to apply our minds. There is a Nafka Mina in what you think when you learn. The whole Keshet to Torah is a connection of D'veykus of a connection. Gemara is your Rebbei and you are the Talmid and there needs to be interaction. Therefore, this is an important lesson that by Limud Hatorah there is Amida, a person stands B'koma Zekufa. He stands with his head held up high. Learning Torah and applying yourself, that is a message for Maimud Har Sinai. Maimud Har Sinai as Rav Schwab said is of course Kol Hatorah Kula. All Mitzvos were accepted then. The Ikkur is the Limud Hatorah, the learning of Torah. The learning of Torah which is paramount. For that a person has to be a Gavra. Of course we understand that our understanding is Bateil to the Daas of those greater than us. But within the parameters of Limud Hatorah we have to apply ourselves.

In general, we find it very hard to suffer discomfort for Limud Hatorah. We find that when people are learning, the first thing that disrupts them they close the Gemara. If a person is tired he closes the Gemara. If a person is thirsty he closes the Gemara. If it is stormy outside a person doesn't go to the Bais Medrash. If it is beautiful outside he doesn't go to the Bais Medrash. The Yeitzer Hora Shters a person from going by any type of a discomfort from being able to learn. Generations stood when they learned. Generations understood that a person has to have an ability, a desire to accept discomforts in order to learn.

The Gemara in Maseches Sanhedrin 5b (4 lines from the top) says (והאמר רב (רעוה בהמה לידע איזה מום קבוע ואיזה מום עובר שמונה עשר חדשים גדלתו אצל) that Rav went for 18 months to live among shepherds to learn the Halachos of the Mumin of a Bechor. The Mumin injuries that might take place to an animal. You can't just learn that from a Sefer. The Gemara says that he went for 18 months to live among the shepherds. Shepherds were the least significant people in the world. They were rough people. They were people who were considered to be ineligible to be witnesses. The Chofetz Chaim in Sefer Tiferes Habayis makes the point in Perek 7. That a person should learn from Rav, he should be willing to endure difficulty in order to be able to sit and be able to learn Torah.

The GRA on himself said and it is quoted in the Hakdama of Pa'as Hashulchan that he had two difficulties, two Kashas regarding the Zohar for which he could not find an answer and if there would be one person at the Sof Hoalom, he would go to the end of the world to get the answer. He would walk if necessary to be Mikabeil. The idea again being this lesson. The lesson that a person should be willing to endure difficulty in order to be Mikabeil Torah to learn Torah. That is a lesson that we have to take on this day the day of Shavuot that is upcoming. I feel and I always feel that the staying up at night to learn is not important because of the 4 or 5 hours that a person learns (of course it is important for those hours). That is not the primary reason. The primary reason is because it is our Yeitzer Hora that doesn't let us endure discomforts for Limud Hatorah. The whole Maimud Har Sinai everyone stood there. There were no chairs at Maimud Har Sinai. I remember when the Kosel was first liberated in '67 and I went there the first time in the early '70s. There were no chairs at the Kosel. People didn't sit at the Kosel, everyone stood. You stood in awe of the place. Many years later a few chairs were brought there for the elderly people. Now everyone

sits there. The point is that when there is awe, a person is willing to endure. It is not hard to stand for an entire Davening in order to be able to Daven at the Kosel. We have to be Machshiv our learning, we have to be willing to endure difficulty for our learning. Willing to get up early or stay up late. The Chashivus, the significance of a Talmid Chochom is that they are exhausted and they fight the sleep in order to learn. The learning isn't so great when you are fighting off the need for sleep. It is Chashuv because a person who endures discomfort for Limud that is a Chashivus.

It is an important thing to accept especially when you are out in the working world and you go through periods with a lot of work to be done and you feel going to the Bais Medrash is hard, to understand that that is what Maimud Har Sinai is all about. The Torah tells us to remember (אֲשֶׁר עָמַדְתָּ לִפְנֵי יְיָ (אֶלְרִיךְ בְּהָרְבַּיּוֹם). You stood there and it took a long period of time. A long period of standing. That was Kabbalas Hatorah.

2. Let me move on to Parshas Bamidbar a Vort regarding Sheivet Shimon and a Vort regarding Sheivet Levi. Of course those of us Leviim love this time of the year, Bamidbar, Naso, Behaloscha are all Parshios that deal with the Leviim. Therefore, let me mention an interesting Chazal regarding the Leviim. It is a Halacha in the Shulchan Aruch Harav Siman 201:3 where he writes that although it is only a Mitzvah to be Makdim a Kohen (it is a Mitzvah to give a Kohen things first), the Shulchan Aruch Harav says that there is no Chiyuv to give Kadima to a Levi. Nevertheless, Tov L'hakdima V'ose Kain Maarich Yomim. You get Arichos Yamim if you give a Levi Kadima, to give him to Bentch for example if there is no Kohen. It is a fascinating idea because Al Pi Halacha there is no obligation. He says Ha'oseh Kain Maarich Yamim. What is that secret of that Aruch Yamim? In previous years I think I mentioned the Pshat of the Meshech Chochmo which you can look up. Today, I would like to mention to you a second thought, an important thought. That starts with a Havana, an understanding of the concept of (אשרי מי שבניו זכרים) that the Gemara in Maseches Kiddushin 82b (7 lines from the top) says (שבניו זכרים אשרי מי) that it is good to have any child a healthy child but praiseworthy is one who Hashem gives him the Zechus to have male offspring. What is so special about male offspring?

We see life in this world as a temporary state, as a fleeting opportunity. It is all about doing Mitzvos. Olam Hazeh is about accomplishing the things that this world was created for and therefore, when we look at things in this world in an idealistic way, when we look at things in this world taking away our own Negios, we understand that the main Nikuda, the main point of existence in this world is Kiyum Mitzvos, it is all about doing Ratzon Hashem. The Gemara in Maseches Horayos 13a (23 lines from the top in the Mishna) says that (האיש קודם לאשה להחיית). There is an order a Seder of saving a person's life. It says that one saves a male before a female. Why? Our understanding is that that is because a male has more Mitzvos than a woman. A male is obligated in more Mitzvos than a woman. I mentioned it in a previous week Rav Schwab's explanation of Shelo Asani Goy, Shelo Asani Oved, Shelo Asani Isha. That it goes back to the fundamental idea that existence is all for Kiyum Mitzvos. If someone who is born into a state of Kiyum Mitzvos which is a greater opportunity, it is certainly more fortunate. In a way he is more alive. That is the idea of (אשרי מי שבניו זכרים) Ashrei Mi Shebanav Zecharim. A father who has a Ben Zachar the father is able to learn Torah with him. He is able to do many Mitzvos which women do not do. That explains also why for the Mitzva of Pru Ur'vu one should try to have a male and a female child. Because if a person has only male children there are some Mitzvos which are predominantly in the Achrayaos, the responsibility of females. The idea of raising children. The idea of the Mitzvos of Challah, Ner, and Taharas Hamishpacha and therefore, if you want to have a connection to more Mitzvos then you should pray to have a Zachar and a Nikaiva (male and female offspring).

Getting back to Sheivet Levi. Sheivet Levi has more Mitzvos. As a matter of fact this is a proof to our whole Yesod. Because the Tur in Siman 201 says

there is no Mitzva to give Kadima (to give preference) to a Levi. The Magen Avraham brings and in Yoreh Dai'a 251:9 we find in Dinai Tzedaka that a Levi has Kadima to a Yisrael.

The Machatzis Hashekel explains why. He says in the Inyan of giving support, you give a Levi first. Why? A Levi has no greater Kedusha, he is the same as a Yisrael. However, he has more Mitzvos. When the Bais Hamikdash will be built he will have more Mitzvos. Mimeila, therefore, we understand the idea that someone Ha'oseh Kain Maarich Yamim, someone who gives Kadima to a Levi and appreciates that fine point that life is for Kiyum Mitzvos and someone who is Mikayeim more Mitzvos is greater, that is an extraordinary appreciation.

3. Well for Sheivet Shimon I am left with a minute or two so let me give you a quick thought. In Parshas Bamidbar Sheivet Shimon has 59,300 people as is brought in 1:23 (מֵאוֹת פְּקֻדֵיהֶם, לְמִטָּה שְׁמֵעוֹן--הַשְּׂעָה וְהַמִּשִּׁים אֶלֶף, וְשֵׁלֶשׁ) . In Parshas Pinchas in 26:14 (הַשְּׂמֵעָנִי--שְׁנַיִם וְעֶשְׂרִים אֶלֶף, וּמֵאֵתָיִם אֶלֶף, מְשֻׁפָּחֹת) only 22,200. An incredible Yerida. Rashi explains there 26:13 (אֲבָל לִפִּי הַחֲסֻרוֹן) במנין זה ממנין הראשון שבמדבר סיני, נראה שכל כ"ד אלף נפלו משבטו שחסר משבט שמעון (זמרי, בן-קלוא) that the 24,000 who died in the Mageifa with Zimri Ben Salu in Parshas Pinchas were from Sheivet Shimon. This is an important point for Nach.

We find (and people are not aware of this) that in Eretz Yisrael when the portions were divided every Sheivet got a defined portion, there were boundaries. Sheivet Shimon was unusual, they did not get a defined portion. They got cities that are within Sheivet Yehuda, specific cities. Why did they get cities why didn't they get a specific portion?

The Sefer Haksav V'hakabala (on page # 297 on Posuk 26:54) in Parshas Pinchos explains that it is the reason that is related to these numbers. What do these numbers have to do with anything? Eretz Yisrael was divided according to the Yotzei Mitzrayim, it was divided according to the number of people who left Mitzrayim. So Shimon was entitled to a gigantic portion as he had 59,300. However, when it came to it they had fewer people. They had only the 22,200 that were getting such a big portion. Since there was a desire not to leave parts of the land empty as the Posuk says in Shemos 23:29 (וְרִבְּהָ עֲלִיָּה חֵיַת הַשָּׂדֶה) therefore, Shimon got land for 59,000 people a land with a greater value. As you all know land in the cities is more valuable, more expensive than out on the country side. That explains the Haksav V'hakabala, is why Shimon got cities specifically because his real estate had to be worth a greater amount. Mimeila he got cities and not the countryside. So this is a quick explanation.

Turning again to our preparation for Chag Hashavuos and Kabbalas Hatorah I beg all of you to take Kabbalas Hatorah seriously. It is not all about cheesecake and ice cream. Kabbalas Hatorah about being Moser Nefesh to learn. Not only all night but to get up in the morning by day at a decent hour and go to Shul. I come to Shul and there are not too many people there Shavuos afternoon. Please join us, be there and IY"H we hope to have a Gevaldige Kabbalas Hatorah. A Kabbalas Hatorah that is Mashpia, that influences us for the coming year. A Gut Shabbos to one and all and a Gut Yom Tov.

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Shavuos: The G-d-Given and the Man-Made

Rabbi Moshe Schapiro

Reference Librarian, Mendel Gottesman Library, Yeshiva University

Sometimes we can find the big ideas in small details. One such detail is that Shavuos is not assigned a specific calendar day by the Torah. Its calendrical date in Sivan is not determined by when Rosh Chodesh Sivan is declared, but simply by counting 50 days from the second night of Pesach. Therefore, the Talmud (Rosh HaShanah 6b) notes that if both Nisan and Iyyar are 29 days long, Shavuos will fall on the seventh of the month of Sivan. If both are 30 days, Shavuos will fall on the fifth, and if one month is 29 and the other 30, Shavuos will fall on the sixth (as it does according to our current calendar). Shavuos's unfixed date is not merely a calendrical quirk, however, but a function of a

big idea: the essence of the holiday of Shavuos as the day when we received both the Torah she-be-ketav (Written Torah) and the Torah she-be-al peh (Oral Torah). Shabbat and Mo'ed

At the end of Parashat Emor, there is a special section known as Parashat Ha-Mo'adot (Megilah 30b), which introduces the cycle of the festivals of the year. Before discussing the festivals, however, the Torah begins with a short review of the commandment to observe Shabbat:

Hashem spoke to Moshe, saying: Speak to the Children of Israel and say to them: Hashem's appointed festivals — that you are to designate as holy convocations — these are My appointed festivals. For six days, labor may be done, and the seventh is a day of complete rest, a holy convocation. You shall not do any work. It is a Sabbath for Hashem in all your dwelling places.

Vayikra 23:1-3

Rashi asks why Shabbat appears here in conjunction with the Parashat Ha-Mo'adot and he answers:

Anyone who violates the festivals, we consider it as if he violated the Sabbath, and anyone who upholds the festivals, we consider it as if he upheld the Sabbath.

Rashi's answer is perplexing. The punishment for the violation of Shabbat is far more severe than the punishment for violating any of the festivals. Shabbat and mo'ed are not equivalent and, at least on the surface, appear to be unconnected. Why should the violation of a festival interfere in any way with a person's observance of Shabbat?

The Talmud (Beitzah 17a) articulates a fundamental distinction between Shabbat and the yamim tovim. Shabbat is "mikdesha ve-kayyama" — "sanctified and confirmed," meaning it is a reality set by G-d. Mankind does not determine when Shabbat falls out. However, yom tov is dependent on us. The beit din determines and declares when Rosh Chodesh is (kiddush ha-chodesh), thereby establishing when yom tov will fall that month. [Even today, our current, fixed calendar represents the formalization of the kiddush beit din process]. This distinction expresses itself in the liturgy. The middle blessing of the Shemoneh Esrei for Shabbat ends with the words "mekadesh ha-Shabbat" — "He who sanctifies the Sabbath" — because it is G-d alone who establishes the Sabbath. However, on yom tov we conclude the blessing "mekadesh Yisrael ve-ha zemanim" — "He who sanctifies Israel and the festivals" — because it is through Israel that the festivals come to be sanctified. The Ohr Ha-Chaim (Vayikra 23:2) points out that the opening verses of Parashat Ha-Mo'adot hint at this distinction. Regarding Shabbat, the Torah says, "Hashem's appointed festivals, that you are to designate as holy convocations — these are My appointed festivals." The Torah repeats "these are My appointed festivals" to emphasize that it is G-d alone who establishes the Sabbath, and we cannot choose to make the day of rest on any other day. However, after speaking about Shabbat and before listing off each individual yom tov, the Torah repeats: "These are the appointed festivals of Hashem, the holy convocations which you shall designate in their appropriate time" (23:4), to emphasize that it is Klal Yisrael who establishes the festivals.

The Shabbat/Yom Tov Analogy to Torah

Rav Avraham Yitzchak Ha-Kohen Kook, in his commentary to the siddur (Olat Reiyah, Kiddush Leil Shabbat), draws a fascinating analogy between Shabbat and yom tov on the one hand, and the Torah on the other. Just as Shabbat is established by G-d, fixed and unchangeable, so too the Torah she-be-ketav was given to Klal Yisrael by Hashem in fixed form, and we cannot change one single letter or verse. However, just as yom tov depends upon the Jewish people's input — namely, that it is only through an act of beit din that the yamim tovim take effect — so too Hashem gave to Klal Yisrael a second Torah — the Torah she-be-al peh, which allows for, requires, and indeed only attains its purpose through human input and endeavor. Each generation's Torah sages must debate and discuss, decide, interpret, and formulate new laws, understandings, and concepts that become an intrinsic part of the Torah itself. This analogy also leads us to an important conclusion about the relationship between Shabbat and yom tov. Just as the Written Torah serves as the source and basis of the Oral Torah, and the Oral Torah interprets and applies the laws of the Written Torah, so, too, the Sabbath is the origin and source of the yamim tovim, and they in turn develop the themes of the Sabbath itself. When we proclaim, in the kiddush for Friday night, that Shabbat is yom techilah le-mikra'ei kodesh — the first of the holy convocations — we do not mean merely that it appears in the beginning of the text of Parashat Ha-Mo'adot. Rather, we mean that the mo'adot draw their holiness from Shabbat and in turn develop and mold the sanctity of Shabbat, much the same way in which the Oral Torah draws its significance from and interprets the Written Torah.

We may understand Rav Kook's terse comments in light of a fascinating observation by Rav Samson Raphael Hirsch (commentary to Vayikra 23:3):

The commandment of the Sabbath is mentioned repeatedly in the Torah, each time with reference to a different aspect of Jewish life, of which the Sabbath is the principal foundation...the Sabbath is the starting point and the climax of all the holy days; the Sabbath is their basis and should find its realization in them.

The Torah speaks about Shabbat in many contexts, each with a different emphasis. Leaving aside Shavuot, which will be addressed at greater length in the next section, we can quickly illustrate Rav Hirsch's assertion. Shabbat's most fundamental message, found in both the second chapter of Bereshit and the Ten Commandments (Shemot 20:11), that G-d is the Creator and King of the universe, is highlighted on Rosh HaShanah. Shabbat as a sign of the covenant between Hashem and Klal Yisrael (Shemot 31:12-18) is reflected on Yom Kippur, a day that celebrates the unique, intimate relationship between G-d and the Jewish people. Shabbat is connected to the idea of faith in G-d's role as provider and protector in the context of the story of the Manna (Shemot 16), and the holiday of Sukkot underscores this theme. Finally, Shabbat is associated with the events of the Exodus (Devarim 5:15), and underscores the themes of human freedom and compassion (Shemot 23:12), which are central to the celebration of Pesach. Shabbat encompasses many different themes and motifs, each of which should inform our weekly experience of the Sabbath. However, it is impossible to give each theme its due every week when there are so many competing, equally important ideas. While the holidays themselves are also multihued and complex, they each emphasize a particular aspect of the Sabbath.

The relationship between the festivals and the Sabbath, understood through the analogy to the Written and Oral Torah, sheds light on Rashi's startling assertion in Vayikra 23 that one who violates the festivals is considered in violation of the Sabbath. The yamim tovim serve to deepen and expand the lessons and messages of the Sabbath just as the Oral Torah deepens and expands the laws and principles of the Written Torah. If one rejects the Oral Torah, he renders the Written Torah a "dead" document, one that cannot be applied to ever-changing circumstances and cannot be relevant to the complexities of real life. So too, one who violates yom tov is cutting short the impact of Shabbat, denigrating its spiritual message and rendering it irrelevant and impotent. In that sense the yom tov violator is violating the Sabbath itself.

Shabbat and Shavuot

The holiday of Shavuot also addresses a particular theme of Shabbat, namely, Matan Torah. However, this connection needs explication as Matan Torah is not explicitly mentioned in the Torah with regard to either Shabbat or Shavuot. There is no direct scriptural evidence that the Torah was given on Shabbat, and yet the Talmud (Shabbat 86b) makes this an axiom: "And everyone agrees that on Shabbat, the Torah was given to Israel." Chazal formulated the text of the liturgy for Shabbat morning to stress the connection between the Sabbath and the giving of the Torah:

Moshe rejoiced in the gift of his portion; that you called him a faithful servant. You placed a crown of splendor upon his head when he stood before You on Mount Sinai. He brought down two stone tablets in his hand, on which was inscribed the observance of the Sabbath.

Similarly, in the Written Torah, Shavuot is called "the Festival of the Harvest" (Shemot 23:16) and "the Festival of Weeks" (Shemot 34:22 and Devarim 16:10), but no mention is made of Shavuot as a celebration of the giving of the Torah. Of course, a simple calculation based on the chronological information given in the nineteenth chapter of Shemot, which introduces the revelation at Sinai, puts the date of Matan Torah approximately around Shavuot. But ultimately, it is only through the Oral Tradition, stated clearly in the Talmud (Pesachim 68b), that we know that Shavuot is "the day upon which the Torah was given." Once again, the Sages fixed this association in the liturgy, in which Shavuot is called zeman Matan Toratenu.² Just as each of the other holidays comes to emphasize a different feature of Shabbat, Shavuot focuses on the aspect of Shabbat that relates to Matan Torah.

As faithful bearers of the tradition, we believe that the Torah that was given on that Shabbat-Shavuot many thousands of years ago was a two-part Torah comprised of the Written Torah and the Oral Torah.³ Incorporating Rav Kook's analogy that Shabbat is likened to Torah she-be-ketav and yom tov to Torah she-be-al peh, two further fascinating points emerge. First, while Shabbat is fundamentally sanctified by G-d, just as the complete text of the Written Torah was given by G-d, there is also an aspect of Shabbat that reflects the human input associated with Torah she-be-al peh. Rav Yosef Dov Soloveitchik (Shiurim Le-Zecher Abba Mari z"l, v.2 Kiddush Ke-Mekadesh Ha-Shabbat) writes that the fact that Shabbat was included with the rest of the festivals in Parashat Ha-Mo'adot means, not only that the festivals draw their sanctity from Shabbat, but that Shabbat itself can be likened to the sanctity of the festivals. The mitzvah of kiddush on Shabbat, based on the verse "Zachor et yom ha-Shabbat le-kadesh" — "Remember the Sabbath day to sanctify it" — instructs us that by making kiddush on Friday night we are not merely acknowledging the sanctity of the Sabbath, but superimposing an additional layer of holiness onto the G-d-given Sabbath. Ramban (Shemot 20:8) compares making kiddush on Shabbat to the act of beit din in sanctifying the new moon or the Yovel year. It is for this reason, for instance, that the Talmud (Pesachim 105b) conceptualizes kiddush and havdalah as "bringing in the day" and "bringing out the day" respectively, because while the beginning and end of Shabbat are

ostensibly simply a function of when it gets dark, there is an aspect of the Sabbath's sanctity that we create and dissolve through kiddush and havdalah.⁴

The holiday of Shavuot also contains within it these two forms of sanctity: the G-d-given and the man-made. R. Mordechai Yehudah Leib Zaks (Milei de-Mordechai, Ve-Zot Ha-Berachah) observes that while Shavuot is a yom tov and therefore can be considered to be established by the beit din, unlike Shabbat which is a fact of the creation as G-d established it, Shavuot can also be seen from the perspective of a Shabbat-like, G-d-given day. We began with the observation that Shavuot can fall either on the fifth, sixth or seventh of the month of Sivan depending on the lengths of the months of Nisan and Iyyar. Usually, a holiday can fall only on two possible days depending on when the beit din declares the new moon for that month. However, Shavuot's calendrical date in Sivan does not directly relate to when Rosh Chodesh Sivan is declared. Shavuot is always 50 days from the second night of Pesach. Its observance is fixed like the Sabbath; its calendar day in Sivan is incidental. Like most festivals, Shavuot does depend in an indirect, removed sense upon the beit din's determination of the month of Nisan and the holiday of Pesach, but it is also a fixed day like the Sabbath. R. Zaks speculates that this dual aspect of Shavuot corresponds to the fact that both the Written and Oral Torah were given on Shavuot and, therefore, the holiday's sanctity reflects both elements: the G-d-given and the man-made.

The Greatest Gift

The holiday of Shavuot celebrates the giving of the Torah, which comprises both the G-d-given Written Torah and man-developed Oral Torah. As such, it exhibits two forms of sanctity: one G-d-given and Shabbat-like and the other man-made and yom tov-like. Rav Yaakov Moshe Charlap (Mei Marom, Terumah 66) utilizes the G-d-given/man-made dichotomy to instruct us on how to better ourselves. The world was created by Hashem; its laws of nature set at the time of creation by G-d's will, but humanity was commanded to "fill the earth and subdue it" (Bereshit 1:28). This exhortation is a challenge to develop the physical world, but more importantly to perfect it spiritually. We must respect and protect G-d's world and G-d's Torah, but at the same time it is the will of G-d that we also develop and transform them. Similarly, we must recognize and appreciate the G-d-given talents and strengths that we possess, but we must utilize them to perfect ourselves by setting and attaining ascending spiritual goals. The message that we must take with us from the yom tov of Shavuot is that we have been given great gifts and we must make them even greater. It is the permission and challenge to do so that is the greatest gift of all.

Notes

1. Obviously, the Oral Torah is G-d-given, just as, ultimately, the yamim tovim only exist because of G-d's commandment, but both are determined and controlled by human involvement.
2. See Magen Avraham in his opening comments to Orach Chaim 494, who questions why we refer to Shavuot as zeman Matan Toratenu in the liturgy, since in our fixed calendar Shavuot always falls on the sixth of Sivan, but the halakha follows the opinion in Shabbat 86b that the Torah was given on the seventh of Sivan. R. Yosef Dov Ha-Levi Soloveitchik (Beit Ha-Levi, Yitro) suggests a profound answer. The Talmud (Shabbat 87a) explains that the rabbi who says that the Torah was given on the seventh of Sivan maintains that it should have been given on the sixth, but that Moshe added an extra day of preparation of his own accord and Hashem subsequently concurred. In essence, we celebrate Shavuot on the sixth of Sivan, the day when the power of Torah she-be-al peh was confirmed by G-d in the hands of the Jewish people. While the official day of Matan Torah may have been the seventh, the confirmation of the power of Torah was already accomplished on the sixth by G-d's acquiescence to Moshe's addition, and so we can confidently refer to it as zeman Matan Toratenu.
3. See the beginning of Rambam's introduction to his Perush Ha-Mishnah.
4. See Rav Herschel Schachter, Ginat Egoz 4, who fine-tunes the distinction between beit din's power to create the fundamental sanctity of the yamim tovim and the power of individuals to superimpose sanctity onto an already existing holy day. We could suggest that these two powers may reflect two aspects of Torah she-be-al peh. The Sages have the power both to create new rules that are fundamentally rabbinic in nature (gezerot and takkanot), as well as to interpret and formulate preexisting laws that are fundamentally biblical in nature (middot she-ha-Torah nidreshet ba-hen).

from: Halachically Speaking <Halachically_Speaking@mail.vresp.com>

date: Fri, May 30, 2014 at 9:44 AM

subject: Eating Dairy on Shavuot

<http://thehalacha.com/>

<http://tinyurl.com/dairyonshavuot>

Eating Dairy on Shavuot

Compiled by Rabbi Moishe Dovid Lebovits

Reviewed by Rabbi Benzion Schiffenbauer Shlita

Eating Dairy on Shavuot

There is a widespread custom to eat dairy products on Shavuot.1

What is the source of this custom? What are the reasons for this

custom? Does it apply to both days? Should the dairy meal be eaten with bread? Are there restrictions regarding eating meat after dairy? These and many more questions will be answered in this issue.

The Source

The earlier authorities who mention this custom say to eat dairy foods with honey.² The reason is that Torah is compared to milk and honey, as it says in the posuk, *Dvash Vichalav Tachas Leshoneich*. Just as milk has the ability to sustain the human body, so too the Torah gives us our spiritual nourishment. However, the custom in all places⁴ is to eat dairy foods even without honey.⁵

The Shulchan Aruch⁶ does not bring the custom to eat dairy on Shavuot, but it is mentioned in the Rama.⁷

actually eat meat and milk, but were not careful to separate between meat and milk.

From this arose the custom of eating dairy on Shavuot, to show that we can be meticulous in keeping the Torah by separating meat and milk.

The numerical value of *chalav* (milk) in Hebrew is forty, which represents the number of days in which Moshe Rabbeinu was taught the Torah. Therefore, we make a *remez* to this and eat milk on Shavuot.

As an infant, Moshe Rabbeinu did not want to drink milk from a non-Jewish woman.

We make a *remez* to this by eating dairy on Shavuot.²⁴

At the time of Matan Torah the Jews were in a sense “born again.” Therefore, we eat dairy on Shavuot since newborns drink milk.²⁵

Har Sinai is called “*gavnunim*”²⁶ which is a *loshon* of *gevina*-cheese.²⁷

It is customary to make a *seuda* upon completing a *mitzvah*.²⁸

Since the counting of the omer has concluded with Shavuot, we make a *seuda*. A meat *seuda* would not suffice, since we always eat meat meals on Yom Tov. In order to indicate that the meal is for the conclusion of the *mitzvah*, we eat a dairy meal on Shavuot.

Practical Difference Between the Reasons

According to the Rama, the dairy food is simply a pretext to have two loaves of bread.

There is no actual reason to eat dairy. According to the other opinion regarding the *pesukim* of honey, milk is connected to the Torah.²⁹

In addition, the latter reason requires both honey and milk, while the Rama only requires dairy.

When to Eat the Dairy?

Many *poskim* say that dairy should be eaten on the first day of Shavuot.³⁰

Others bring the custom without mentioning any specific time to consume dairy.³¹ The custom of most places is to only serve dairy on the first day.³² Some eat dairy in the morning for *Kiddush*,³³ while many others eat a dairy meal on the first night of Shavuot.³⁴ Some suggest that according to the reason of the Rama one should have the dairy meal during the day and then a meat meal.³⁵

Eating Meat³⁶ as Well One of the aspects of *Simchas Yom Tov* is to be happy by eating meat and drinking wine.³⁷ Some say that this obligation is not applicable today, as there is no real joy of eating meat without the *Bais Hamikdash* or *o'er korbonos*.³⁸ Others say the obligation is a *d'rabbanan* today.³⁹

According to many *poskim* one would have to eat meat,⁴⁰ and eating an all dairy meal on Shavuot would be problematic. Others say that one can be lenient with this obligation at night⁴¹ and not eat meat, but most *poskim* do not agree with this.⁴²

The custom of many is not to be concerned about this at every meal.⁴³ Nonetheless, it is preferable to have the milk meal and then meat, and not miss out on this aspect of *Simchas Yom Tov* (see below).⁴⁴

This can be accomplished by eating some milk at *Kiddush* in the morning, and then to do the proper separation and eat meat.⁴⁵ There are opinions that hold that one fulfills his obligation with any tasty food, even if it is not meat. For example, a good tasting *sh* brings happiness as well.⁴⁶

In any case, one should have wine at the meal.⁴⁷ Bread Based on the opinion of the Rama, bread should be served with the dairy meal.⁴⁸

However, the widespread custom is to eat dairy even without a full meal (i.e. *Kiddush*).⁴⁹ Others simply drink a cup of *co'ee* before davening.⁵⁰

This leniency fits nicely with the opinion of the *Bais Halevi*, since having a separation is enough to prove our commitment to the *malachim*.⁵¹

Others explain that the Zohar prohibits eating both milk and meat at the same meal.

This stringency was not practiced during the time of the Rama. Today, however, we practice this stringency, and cannot practice the custom of the Rama. Therefore, the custom of most people is just to have dairy *mezonos* products and not a meal.⁵²

Dairy Foods or Milk The *poskim* rule that drinking milk is enough, and there is no need to eat cheese.⁵³

Separation One should be careful to follow all the separations that are required between eating milk and meat.⁵⁴

When eating milk and then meat, one should have a separate tablecloth.⁵⁵

Waiting after Eating Dairy – *Beracha Achrona* According to the letter of the law, one who ate dairy does not have to wait before eating meat.⁵⁶

The only requirement is to wash his mouth out well as explained in the Shulchan Aruch,⁵⁷ and to rinse his hands.⁵⁸ Some *poskim* say a *beracha achrona* or *benching* is required before eating meat,⁵⁹ while others disagree.⁶⁰

Some have the custom that no *beracha achrona* is required on Shavuot, but they do recite a blessing at any other time of the year.⁶¹

Based on the Zohar, some say that one should wait an hour between dairy and meat.⁶² (Some *poskim* say that if one merely drank milk and wants to eat meat,

even the Zohar would agree that no waiting is required).⁶³ However, the custom of many in *klal yisroel* is to only wait a half hour.⁶⁴

Several explanations are given for this custom. Some say that it is a compromise between the *poskim* who say one does not have to wait at all and the Zohar that requires an hour. Others say that the Zohar's hour is not literal, as we find in many places that an hour simply means a period of time. Therefore, it is sufficient to wait a half hour.⁶⁵

Those who have the custom to wait a half hour must rinse out their mouths properly before eating meat.⁶⁶

Dairy Bread for Shavuot Some accomplish the custom of eating dairy on Shavuot by baking dairy bread.⁶⁷

The *poskim* say that it is permitted to bake a small amount of dairy bread for Shavuot.⁶⁸ According to this, it would only be permitted to bake enough bread for the first day of *Yom Tov*.⁶⁹

One who wishes to bake large amounts should make a conspicuous shape for the bread.⁷⁰

Cakes Cakes and other food items that are not usually eaten together with meat are not subject to the halacha of dairy bread.⁷¹ Therefore, one may bake or buy cheesecake in as much volume as desired, even if it is not a different shape than a regular pastry.⁷²

Similarly, dairy doughnuts or *croissants* are permitted. *Mu'ns* that are served as dessert may be baked with milk. Fish and Milk It is dangerous to eat fish and meat that were cooked together.⁷³

Some extend this problem to fish with milk⁷⁴ or cheese.⁷⁵ This is the custom of some *Sefardim*.⁷⁶

However, the custom amongst the *Ashkenazim* is to be lenient in this regard.⁷⁷ The *Sefardim* are lenient with eating *sh* and butter,⁷⁸ but would not eat a *lox* and cream cheese sandwich. *B'dieved* if one ate milk with *sh* it is ok.⁷⁹

Cheesecake⁸⁰ The *beracha rishona* on cheesecake is *mezonos* if the crust is there for taste, if it's to hold it together then a *shehakol* is recited. The *beracha achrona* is a *borei nefoshos* since one does not generally eat the *shiur* of *mezonos* to recite an *al hamichya*.⁸¹

The following reason is given for the custom to eat cheese (or cheesecake) on Shavuot.⁸² Most foods spoil with age, but cheese improves. Some say that the Torah is old and outdated in our modern world. We eat cheese to indicate that old is good.⁸³

*Kreplach*⁸⁴ Many have a custom to eat *kreplach* on Shavuot.⁸⁵ Some explain that Hashem forced us to accept the Torah.⁸⁶

In the times of *Achashveirosh*, the *Yiddin* accepted the Torah again. When eating *kreplach*, one only tastes the dough at first. After biting into it, one tastes the good part, the cheese. Similarly, the *Yidden* were forced into accepting the Torah, and only later did they accept it again willingly.⁸⁷

Others explain that *kreplach* have three corners. The Torah consists of three parts- Torah, *Nevi'im* and *Kesuvim*. The Torah was given to three segments of the nation- *Kohanim*, *Leviyim* and *Yisroelim*. It was given through Moshe, who was the third child of Amram. It was given after three days of preparation, in the third month of the year.⁸⁸

Blintzes Many people eat *blintzes* on Shavuot. Some *seforim* offer the following reason for this: *blintzim* in Hebrew is *blinitzim*, without *nitzim*. In the Torah we find the word *nitzim*⁸⁹ as a reference to *Dasan* and *Aviram*. When we accepted the Torah it was with *achdus*. Therefore, we eat *blintzes* on Shavuot to say “without *nitzim* –” without arguing like *Dasan* and *Aveiram*.⁹⁰

Thanks to Allen Klein and to hamelaket@gmail.com for collecting the following items:

from: Destiny Foundation/Rabbi Berel Wein <info@jewishdestiny.com>

reply-to: info@jewishdestiny.com

subject: Weekly Parsha from Rabbi Berel Wein

SHAVUOT

Although there is no really accurate way to measure the relative importance of the holidays of the Jewish calendar year, I think that we can all agree that the holiday of Shavuot appears to be the least dramatic of them all. The Torah describes it as an agricultural feast day commemorating the grain harvest and the greening of the first fruits of the season as an offering in the Temple in Jerusalem.

Jewish tradition and rabbinic sanction has emphasized and label the holiday as the anniversary of the granting of the Torah to the Jewish people by G-d at the revelation at Mount Sinai. With the absence of the Temple, the holiday has taken on this commemoration as the center point of its observance.

Secular Zionism attempted to restore the primacy of its agricultural component in commemorating the holiday but was singularly unsuccessful. So, even today in the Land of Israel, once again fruitful and bountiful, this

agricultural aspect of the holiday is still very secondary to its historical commemoration of the revelation at Sinai. And in this there is an important lesson that repeats itself throughout Jewish history.

The great Gaon, Saadya, succinctly summed up this message when he stated: "Our nation – the Jewish people – is a nation only by virtue of its Torah." All of the other facets of our nationhood exist only because of this central historical moment – the granting of the Torah to the Jewish people by G-d through Moshe at the mountain of Sinai. This was and is the pivotal moment in all of Jewish history. Everything else that has occurred to us over these three and a half millennia has direct bearing and stems from that moment in Jewish and human history.

Therefore it should be no wonder as to why the holiday of Shavuot is the day of commemoration of the giving of the Torah at Sinai. Looking back over the long centuries of our existence, we can truly appreciate how we have been preserved, strengthened and enhanced in every way by our studied application of Torah in every facet of our personal and communal lives.

Those who forsook the values and denied the divinity of Torah fell by the wayside of history and are, in the main, no longer part of our people. Unlike Pesach and Succot, Shavuot carries with it no special ritual or commandments. It certainly is the least dramatic of all the holidays of the Jewish calendar. But, rather, it represents the every day in Jewish life – dominated by study and observance of Torah and its eternal values.

The name of the holiday means "weeks" – units of time that measure our progress on this earth. It is not only the seven weeks from Pesach to Shavuot that is being referred to, but rather we are reminded of all of the weeks of our lives that compose our stay in this world. Time has importance to us when we deem it to be meaningful and well spent. The purpose of Torah, so to speak, was and is to accomplish just that. And therefore the day of commemoration of the granting of the Torah to Israel is very aptly named for it is the Torah that gives meaning to our days and weeks.

The customs of the holiday also reference the scene at Mount Sinai on the day of revelation. Eating dairy foods, decorating the synagogue and the home with flowers and greens, and all night Torah study sessions have all become part of the commemoration of the holiday itself. They all relate to Sinai and the revelation. The Jewish people, through long experience and centuries of analysis have transformed this seemingly physical agricultural holiday into the realm of spirituality and eternal history.

On this day of festivity we are granted an insight into the past and the future at one and the same time. We are able to unlock the secrets of our survival and eternity as a nation, and as the prime force in human civilization for these many millennia. So it is the holiday of Shavuot that grants true meaning and necessary legitimacy to all of the other holidays of the Jewish calendar year.

Shavuot is the cornerstone of the entire year, for without it all the days of celebration and commemoration remain devoid of spirituality and eternity. It does not require for itself any special commandments or observances because it is the foundation of all commemorations throughout Jewish life and time.

Chag sameach
Berel Wein

from: Destiny Foundation/Rabbi Berel Wein <info@jewishdestiny.com>
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subject: Weekly Parsha from Rabbi Berel Wein

BAMIDBAR

In this week's reading of the Torah, almost the entire text is devoted to a count of the Jewish people as they encamped in the desert of Sinai. Later in this same book of the Torah, a further count will be taken and recorded. This idea of taking a census of the population of the nation is easily understood and accepted in our society as well. Currently almost all countries and societies conduct a census on a regular basis.

However, reading further in the Bible, we see that the kings and leaders of the Jewish people in the Land of Israel also took, at the very least, a partial census of the people at certain given opportunities. Yet, even though the results of the census here in the desert of Sinai is given to us in minute detail and exact numbers, the later counts of the Jewish people, when they resided in the Land of Israel, never, except for military formations, was recorded for us in exact numbers.

It is as though the numbers of those later governmental counts are seemingly immaterial and irrelevant to the core story of the Jewish people. So, why then does the counting of the Jewish people and its resultant numbers play such a dominant role in the text of the Torah? And this is especially difficult to deal with when the Torah itself tells us that we will never be a nation of large numbers of people but that rather we will always be "the fewest in number....."

Every individual has a worth and a value no matter the time in which he lives or where he is located on this earth. Nevertheless, there is a difference between the count of a dwelling in isolation and under supernatural conditions in a trackless desert, and the count of the people living in its own country and attempting to develop its own society and culture under "normal" circumstances.

In the desert, everything was yet theoretical and potential but not yet real and practical. Therefore people were numbers and to a certain extent they were all absolutely equal. But when the Jewish people arrived in the Land of Israel, the task of nation-building required – and continues to require - the assignment of different tasks to different people.

A living society is constructed by many different forces and ideas - and this presupposes many different people who are not mere numbers but rather independent thinkers and doers. In prisons and enforced labor camps, people were only numbers. In a vibrant dynamic society, we are not interested in the numbers as much as we are interested in the tasks fulfilled, the dreams being dreamt and the independence of human thought and creativity.

In this scenario, we do not see the actual numbers of the count as being vital to the task at hand. Naturally, numbers and size of population are important. But they are only limited factors in defining the greatness of the people and the strength of the nation. No longer living in a desert, in exile, not living in theory but in practice, each of us has to apply one's self to the task before us here in Israel.

Shabbat shalom Rabbi Berel Wein

<http://www.ravaviner.com/2015/05/hilchot-shavuot-laws-of-shavuot.html>

Hilchot Shavuot - Laws of Shavuot Rav Shlomo Aviner

Early Davening on Shavuot

Q: Can one daven Maariv early on Shavuot, or is it a problem because one needs 7 complete weeks of Sefirat Ha-Omer?

A: Ashkenazim – No, Sefardim are lenient (Mishneh Berurah 414:1. Shut Yechaveh Daat 6:30).

Milchigs

Q: Is there an obligation to eat Milchigs on Shavuot?

A: It is the Custom. Yemenite Jews do not do so (Shulchan Aruch Ha-Mekutzar, p. 72).

Q: Does one have to eat an entire Milchig meal?

A: It is enough to have one dairy food. And it is then possible to wash out one's mouth, wash one's hands and clean the table, and have a Fleischig meal (Or Le-Tzion 3:196). And the Steipler Gaon would only have a Milchig meal at night (Orchot Rabbenu vol. 1, p. 98).

Learning on the Night of Shavuot

Q: Is there an obligation to learn the entire night of Shavuot?

A: No. But it is a proper custom. Someone who is unable should try to learn until midnight (Magen Avraham, Orach Chaim 494).

Q: Which is preferable – learning all night and falling asleep during Shacharit or going to sleep?

A: Going to sleep. Davening Shacharit without falling asleep is a basic halachah, and learning all night is a worthwhile addition. The custom of learning Torah the entire night of Shavuot is mentioned by the Magen Avraham (Orach Chaim #494), based on the Zohar, that we dedicate the night to learning Torah in an attempt to rectify a mistake made by the Nation of Israel at the time of the Giving of the Torah. When Hashem "arrived" to give the Torah to the Nation of Israel, we were still sleeping and had to be woken up. The custom therefore developed to stay awake all night to spirituality rectify for the oversleeping and to show our zeal for the Torah. But one should be aware that if he cannot Daven Shacharit with proper concentration, on account of the exhaustion of learning Torah all night, it is better not to stay up since Davening properly is a clear obligation (the Magen Avraham makes this exact point regarding staying up all night on Yom Kippur – see Orach Chaim 611:11).

Q: Which is preferable – learning during the night, or learning during the day, if I will learn more during the day?

A: During the day, since learning more Torah is a basic halachah, and learning Torah all night on Shavuot is a worthwhile addition. This is unlike the ruling of Ha-Rav Chaim Kanvieski that the custom is to learn all night, and it is preferable to learn during the night even if one learns less than he would have during the day (Piskei Shemuot, pp. 81-82).

Although Ha-Rav Yitzchak Zev Soloveitchik, the Brisker Rav, was surprised that people are so particular to stay awake the entire night of Shavuot, which is a custom, while on Pesach night, where there is a law to discuss the Exodus from Egypt until one is overcome by sleep, people are not so careful.

And in the city of Brisk, people were not careful to follow the custom of staying awake the entire night of Shavuot, since why is this night different from all other night? And also, learning on Shavuot night is not more important than learning during the day (Uvdot Ve-Hanhagot Le-Beit Brisk vol. 2, p. 79).

And it is related in the book "Ha-Shakdan" (vol. 2, p. 240) that one of Ha-Rav Yosef Shalom Elyashiv's grandsons once asked him why he does not stay awake all night on Shavuot like everyone else, but follows his regular learning schedule of waking up at 2:00 AM to learn Torah... Rav Elyashiv explained that he calculated that if he changed his few hours of sleep on that night, he would not gain more time to learn Torah, and he would actually lose 15 minutes of learning! For a few precious minutes of learning Torah, he decided that it is preferable to go to sleep at the beginning of the night as usual...

And Gerrer Chasidim have a saying: Our Tikun Leil Shavuot is Keriyat Shema Al Ha-Mita (reciting the Keriyat Shema before going to bed)... Therefore, each person should therefore carefully consider if it is worthwhile for him to stay up all night since there is a concern that "his gain is offset by his loss."

Q: I heard that it is forbidden to engage in idle chatter on the night of Shavuot?

A: It is not a prohibition, but it is proper, and one should try as much as possible to refrain (Kaf Ha-Chaim 494:11).

Q: Is one obligated to learn the Tikun Leil Shavuot?

A: No. A person should learn Torah in a subject that his heart desires (Avodah Zarah 19a). And Ha-Rav Chaim Kanievski said that there are different customs, each of which is acceptable (Piskei Shemuot, p. 81).

Q: If one's father says the Tikun, should his son also say the Tikun, or is it permissible to learn Gemara?

A: It is a personal decision. And Ha-Rav Yosef Shalom Elyashiv said: "It is better for him to learn Massechet Baba Metzia, Perek Ha-Socher Et Ha-Po'alim [One who hires workers], and even if his father says the Tikun."

And Ha-Rav Chaim Kanievski said: "If his father says the Tikun, he should also say the Tikun" (Yadoon Moshe vol. 9 #59).

Q: Do women also need to learn all night?

A: They are not obligated, but it is certainly a good thing.

For one who will remain awake all night, this is how he should act in the morning:

Talit

One who wears Tzitzit all night should not recite a new blessing on it in the morning. One should try to hear the blessing said by someone who is obligated to recite it or he should have the Tzitzit in mind when he recites the blessing over his Talit (Shulchan Aruch, Orach Chaim 8:16 with Mishnah Berurah #42).

Netilat Yadayim

One should wash "Netilat Yadayim" without a blessing or hear it from someone who is obligated to recite it (Shulchan Aruch Ha-Rav 4:13). It is preferable to use the restroom and one is then obligated according to all opinions to wash "Netilat Yadayim." After washing "Netilat Yadayim," he should recite the blessing of "Al Netilat Yadayim" and "Asher Yatzar" (Shulchan Aruch, Orach Chaim 4:13 with Mishnah Berurah #27, 29, 30). "Elohaim Neshamah" and "Ha-Ma'avir Sheinah"

They should be recited without the ending of using Hashem's Name or be heard from someone who is obligated to recite them, since these blessings were established over the return of the soul and removal of sleep and neither of these occurred (Shulchan Aruch, Orach Chaim 47 with Mishnah Berurah #30 and Biur Halachah). If one sleeps a half an hour, one is obligated to recite these blessings (Shulchan Aruch, Orach Chaim 4:16 with Mishnah Berurah #34-35 and Biur Halachah).

"Ha-Noten Le-Yaef Koach"

One should recite this blessing even if he is very tired, since this blessing was not established for the person's individual state, but as a general praise of Hashem who created His world which includes the removal of tiredness (Shulchan Aruch, Orach Chaim 46 with Mishnah Berurah #22 and Shulchan Aruch, Orach Chaim 47 with Mishnah Berurah #28). Chasidim recite all of the morning blessings even if they remain awake all night (Shulchan Aruch Ha-Rav 47:7 and Siddur Chabad in the laws before the morning blessings and blessings over learning Torah).

Blessings over Learning Torah

There is a dispute whether these blessings should be recited if one remains awake all night. One option is that the morning before Shavuot, one make a condition that the blessings will be for the following day as well. One can also hear the blessings from someone who slept and both of them have in mind that the blessings will apply to both of them (Shulchan Aruch, Orach Chaim 47 with Mishnah Berurah #25-28). If neither of these is an option, one can recite the blessings based on the opinion of the Shut Sha'agat Aryeh (#24-25) that these blessings are a Torah Mitzvah and in the case of a doubt, one is strict to recite them. This ruling is found in Maran Ha-Rav Kook's commentary on the siddur "Olat Re'eiyah" (vol. 1, p. 59 #5) and in Ha-Rav Ovadiah Yosef's responsa (Shut Yabia Omer vol. 5, Orach Chaim #6 and Shut Yechaveh Daat 3:33).

In this regard, women are also required to recite the blessings over learning Torah and these blessings are printed in all of the Siddurim for women. Since women are not obligated to learn Torah, how can they recite the blessing "Blessed is Hashem... who has made us holy and commanded us to engage in words of Torah"? There are various answers, but the answer of Ha-Rav Yitzchak Zev Soloveitchik, known as the Griz, on the Rambam (at the end of Hilchot Berachot, p. 10) and Maran Ha-Rav Kook (Orach Mishpat 11, 2) is that these are not blessings over performing a mitzvah but blessings of praise. If the Torah was not given, the world would be in darkness for both men or women. Women therefore also thank Hashem for the Torah being in the world.

<http://torah.org/series/rabbizweig/>

Ethics of Our Fathers
Rabbi Yochanan Zweig

'They proved their lineage according to their families and their fathers' houses" (Bamidbar 1:18).

Rashi (ad loc) explains that every individual in Bnei Yisroel was required to bring proof of his lineage at this time, establishing the Shevet to which he belonged. Yalkut Shimoni (Bamidbar 1-684) states further that the nations of the world actually asked Hashem to give them the Torah as well, but Hashem refused to grant their request because they were unable to establish their own genealogy. Why is the establishment of genealogy a prerequisite to receiving the Torah?

Because the ultimate goal of the Torah is the proper development and refinement of one's character, the Torah emphasizes the importance of maintaining moral and ethical standards. Unfortunately, in today's society, we are constantly inundated by influences that run counter to this ideal. As an example; contemporary culture not only values the notion of amassing great wealth, but in particular, it idealizes the concept of amassing wealth without working for it. This shift in values is evidenced by the great success of Ponzi schemes, which have netted countless victims. The reason so many people are taken in by these con artists is not that people have become less intelligent; rather, it is that they have absorbed the message of society that work is not a prerequisite for making a living. The appeal of these schemes lies in their promise of massive profits without the need to invest any time or effort. Thanks to the influences of modern society, people tend to wish so desperately for those promises to be true that they become willing victims of the purveyors of any such hope.

How can a person develop an inner moral compass that will help him resist the temptation search for shortcuts, or worse even - to cheat and steal? For this purpose, it is crucial to have role models at home. Thus, Hashem told the nations of the world that since their genealogy was uncertain - they did not even know who their own fathers were, it was impossible for them to have grown up with proper role models. This made them unworthy of receiving the Torah.

This understanding should serve as the source of a tremendous insight into the significance of parental influence and teach us how we must deal with our own children. The key to raising good children is being an honest and moral person. External displays of Frumkeit are merely the trimmings; the essence of a person is measured by his moral compass. Unfortunately this is a fact that is lost even on members of the "religious" community. Many families have no issue breaking the spirit of the law as long as they aren't breaking the letter of the law.

An example of this is buying something that you intend to use but with the knowledge that after using it you will return it to the place of purchase for a full refund. Or amassing many tens of credit cards (sometimes hundreds) in order to receive all the incentives offered by each credit card issuer without ever intending to use the cards. In fact, in many ways this is more devastating to a child's moral development than growing up with parents who steal outright. Eventually a child might learn that stealing is wrong, but he will almost certainly never learn that breaking the spirit of the law is wrong.

The only hope for developing a child's moral character is with strong parental guidance. This is why a strong family structure is crucial to the process. If a child grows up without the proper role models he will not have a proper example to guide him through life. Even if some individual children can overcome this disability, an entire nation without a strong family lineage cannot overcome this as a society. For this reason HaShem didn't want to give the Torah to those nations that were unable to establish a proper family lineage.

How Precious Life Is

Parshas Bamidbar begins with a census of the Jewish people. In fact, rabbinic literature refers to the book of Bamidbar as the "Chumash of the counts" (Chomesh haPekudim). Even in the secular world, the fourth of the "Five Books of Moses" is referred to as the Book of Numbers. The Torah in this parsha goes through every single tribe, listing how many people (males above the age of 20) were in that tribe, and then at the end provides a final tabulation: "These were all the counted ones of the Children of Israel, according to their fathers' house, from twenty years of age and up, everyone who goes out to the army in Israel: All their counted ones were 603,550." [Bamidbar 1:45-46].

The Torah's narration then moves onto the story of the "Flags". There were four Camps, each with 3 tribes. The Torah lists which tribe was in each camp. For instance the Torah says [Bamidbar 2:3-4]: "Those who encamp to the front, at the east, shall be the division of the camp of Judah according to their armies – and the prince of the children of Judah is Nahshon son of Amminadav – its army and their counted ones are 74,600." So too, for each of the tribes the Torah tells us the prince of the tribe and the number of people in that tribe – even though the Torah just listed these exact numbers in the previous chapter describing the census! If this were not enough, at the conclusion of the description of the flag encampments the Torah once again gives us the sum total of all the camps: "These are the counts of the Children of Israel according to their fathers' house; all the counts of the camps according to their armies, 603,550." [Bamidbar 2:32]

If any parsha in the Torah contains redundancies – this is it. We know the Torah is usually so stingy with its words. Normally we expound major laws from even an extra (letter) vov. The Medrash here comments on this: The redundant reference to the numbers of Tribes of Israel individually and the redundant reference to the population of the entire nation collectively is indicative of Hashem's love for the Jewish people. We are so precious to Him that – as it were – He loves to count us repeatedly.

We can appreciate this if we imagine a collector of rare coins. He has a special place where he keeps his coin collection and every so often, he takes them out and counts them repeatedly. This is his treasure. The Medrash says we are the treasure of the Almighty so He counts us repeatedly — by tribe, by grand total, and again by tribe and by grand total.

The Ramban, however, gives a different explanation for the apparent redundancy. The Ramban notes that three weeks transpired from the time when they were originally counted until the day they actually set up the system of travelling with the flags. During those 21 days, miraculously, no one died from the entire nation. They had 603,550 people at the start of the period and they had the exact same 603,550 people at the end of the period. According to actuarial tables, in 21 days, out of a population of 600,000+, it is inevitable that there will be deaths! I read a statistic recently that every single day there are 100 military funerals in the United States (of veterans of past wars). The Ramban claims that the reason the Torah repeated these numbers is to highlight the miracle that in 21 days nobody died.

However, we can still ask as follows. The Torah is so stingy with its use of letters. Why is this miracle so important that it was worthy of expending all these pasukim [verses] to tell us about this "miracle"? Reb Leib Rotkin wrote an insight on this question that he said he heard in the Yeshiva in Kletsk. He writes that this miracle is so important because of a major principle of Judaism: Whoever preserves the life of a single Jew is considered as if he preserved the entire world (kol ha'mekayem nefesh achas m'yisrael k'ilu kiyem olam maleh). Life is so precious, that even saving one individual is like saving an entire world.

The halacha is that we desecrate Shabbos to save a person's life. We even desecrate Shabbos to give a person a couple of extra hours. The Torah lets us know how important Jewish life is by spending all these pasukim to tell us one thing: nobody died! Human life is so precious that this is a miracle that bears repeating repeatedly in an elaborate manner with redundant verbiage,

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Rav Yissocher Frand - Parshas Bamidbar

as the Torah does in this parsha. Every life makes a difference. Every person makes a difference. Every day of living makes a difference.
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ou.org Shavuot: The Torah's Mystery Man

Excerpted from Rabbi Norman Lamm's <http://www.ou.org/oupress/products-page/passover/festivals-of-faith-reflections-on-the-jewish-holidays/>

The Book of Ruth read on Shavuot is a beautiful and inspiring story, instructive to us in many ways. The story itself is fairly simple, and most of us are, or should be, well acquainted with it. The cast of characters is well-known: Boaz, Ruth and Naomi as the major characters, and Orpah, Elimelech, Mahlon and Kilyon as the minor characters. But there is one personage who makes a brief appearance in this Book (chapter 4) whom we may designate as the "Mystery Man"! The Bible doesn't even give him a name. He is an anonymous and therefore mysterious character. You recall that Boaz was determined to marry this young widow of his cousin, this Moabite girl Ruth who had embraced Judaism. Now since Ruth and her mother-in-law Naomi owned the land left to them by their respective husbands, marriage would mean that these estates would be transferred to the new husbands. Let us remember that in those days real estate had more than commercial value—it meant the family inheritance, and sentiment was supported by law in making every attempt to keep property within the family or as close to it as possible. Now while Boaz was a first cousin, there was a closer relative—the brother of Elimelech, the father of her late husband. Before Boaz could marry her and take possession of the family property, he needed the closer relative's consent (this relative is called the go'el or redeemer, for he redeems the family's possessions). Boaz therefore met this man and offered him priority in purchasing the lands of father and sons. He seemed willing to do this, regardless of price. But when Boaz told him that he would also have to marry Ruth if he should redeem the land, the go'el hesitated, then refused. I can't do it, he said. Boaz was then next in line for the right of redemption, and that he did, and, of course, he married Ruth. From this union, four generations later, came one of the greatest Jews in our long history, King David.

Who is this relative who missed the historic opportunity to enter history? What is his name? We do not know. The Bible does not tell us. It does tell us rather pointedly that it does not want to mention his name. When the book describes Boaz's calling to the man to offer him the chance of redemption, we read that Boaz said, "Come here such a one and sit down" (Ruth 4:1). Peloni Almoni—"such a one." Lawyers might translate that as "John Doe." Colloquially we might translate those words as "so-and-so," or the entire phrase in slang English would read, "and he said, hey you, come here and sit down." Translate it however you will, the Torah makes it clear that it has no wish to reveal this man's name. Evidently he doesn't deserve it. He isn't worthy of having his name mentioned as part of Torah.

We may rightly wonder at the harsh condemnation of this person by the Torah. Why did he deserve this enforced anonymity? He was, after all, willing to redeem the land of his dead brother and nephew. But he balked at taking Ruth into the bargain as a package deal and marrying her out of a sense of duty. Well, who wouldn't do just that? Are those grounds for condemnation?

As a matter of fact, our Rabbis tried to pry behind this veil of secrecy and they found his true name. It was, they tell us, Tov, which means "good" (Ruth Rabbah 6:3; Tanhuma, Behar, 8). He was a good chap. He showed a generally good nature. There was nothing vicious about him. And yet the Torah keeps him as a mystery man, it punishes him by making him a nameless character. He remains only a faint and anonymous shadow in the gallery of sacred history. His name was never made part of eternal Torah. He was deprived of his immortality. He is known only as Peloni Almoni, "the other fellow, "so-and-so," "the nameless one." A goodly sort of fellow, yet severely punished. Why is that so?

Our Sages have only one explanation for that harsh decree. By playing on the word Almoni of the title Peloni Almoni, they derive the word illem—mute or dumb. He remains without a name she-illem hayah be-divrei Torah because he was mute or dumb, speechless in Torah (Ruth Rabbah 7:7). He was not a Torah-Jew. Some good qualities, yes, but not a ben Torah. When it came to Torah, he lost his tongue. He could express himself in every way but a Torah way. Had he been a Torah kind of Jew, he would not have sufficed by just being a nice chap and buying another parcel of land. He would have realized that it is sinful to despise and underrate another human being merely because she is a poor, forlorn, friendless stranger. Had he been imbued with Torah he

would have reacted with love and charity to the widow and the orphan and the stranger, the non-Jew. The Rabbis suggest that his reluctance to marry Ruth was for religious reasons: that the Torah forbids marriage with a Moabite, and Ruth was a Moabite. Had he ever bothered to study Torah in detail, as a Jew ought to, he would have known the elementary principle of Mo'avi ve-lo Mo'avivyah (Yevamot 76b)—only male Moabites could never marry into the Jewish nation; female Moabites are acceptable spouses. Once this Moabite girl had decided to embrace Judaism from her own free will and with full genuineness and sincerity, she was as thoroughly Jewish as any other Jewish woman, and a Jewish man could marry her as he could the daughter of the Chief Rabbi of Israel. But this man was illem be-divrei Torah, he was unfeeling in a Torah way, he was out of joint with the spirit of Torah, he was ignorant of its laws and teachings; he had no contact with it. And a man of this sort has no name, insofar as Torah is concerned. He must remain Peloni Almoni—the nameless one. Such a person is unworthy of having his name immortalized in the Book of Eternal Life. His name has no place in Torah.

What we mean by a "name" and what the Torah meant by it, is something infinitely more than the meaningless appellative given to a person by his parents. It refers, rather, to a spiritual identity; it is the symbol of a spiritual personality in contact with the Divine, hence with the source of all life for all eternity. A name of this kind is not given; it is earned. A name of this sort is not merely registered by some bored clerk in the city records. It is emblazoned in the sacred letters of eternity on the firmament of time. One who is, therefore, Almoni, strange to Torah, can never be worthy of such a name. He must remain a Peloni Almoni.

It is told of the famous conqueror, Alexander the Great, that he was inspecting his troops one day and espied one particularly sloppy soldier. He said to him, "soldier, what is your name?" The soldier answered, "Sir, it is Alexander." The great leader was stunned for a moment, then said to him, "well, either change your name or change your behavior." That is what we mean by a name in Torah. It is the behavior, the personality, the soul, and not the empty title that counts.

As far as we Jews are concerned as a people, we can be identified primarily through Torah. Without it we are a nameless mass. Our history, like that of other peoples, has in it elements of military ventures, politics, economics. But more than any other people, it is a history of scholarship, of Torah. It was a non-Jew—Mohammed, the founder of Islam—who called us "The People of the Book"—not just books, but "The Book." It was a non-Jew—the famed economist Thorsten Veblen—who called Jews "eternal wayfarers in the intellectual no-man's land." It was a non-Jew—the Protestant philosopher Paul Tillich—who said that, for Christians, Jews serve the spiritual purpose of preventing the relapse of Christianity into paganism. It was a non-Jew—the King of Italy—who in 1904 told Theodor Herzl that "sometimes I have Jewish callers who wince perceptibly at the mere mention of the word Jew. That is the sort I do not like. Then I really begin talking about Jews. I am only fond of people who have no desire to appear other than they are." The King of Italy was referring to nameless Jews, those who reject the name "Jew," those who are "mute in the words of Torah." For the Jew who is not

illem be-divrei Torah knows that the function and destiny of our people is to be a "holy nation and kingdom of priests" (Ex. 19:6). As a people we have the choice: remain with Torah and be identified with the House of David, be benei melakhim, princes of the spirit—or become nameless and faceless blurs in the panorama of history; the people of Boaz, or a collection of Peloni Almonis.

And what holds true for our people as a whole holds true for us as individuals as well. The Kabbalah and Hasidism have maintained that the name of every Jew is merummaz ba-Torah, hinted at in the Torah. Here too they meant "name" as a source of spiritual identification, as an indication of a living, vibrating, pulsating, soulful personality, a religious "somebody." When you are anchored in Torah, then you are anchored in eternity. Then you are not an indistinguishable part of an anonymous mass, but a sacred, individual person.

We who are here gathered for Yizkor, for remembering those dearly beloved who have passed on to another world, we should be asking ourselves that terrific question: will we be remembered? How will we be remembered? Or better: will we deserve to be remembered? And are we worthy enough to have our names immortalized in and through Torah? Are we or are we not illemim bedivrei Torah?

Oh, how we try to achieve that "name," that disguise for immortality! We spend a lifetime trying to "make a name for ourselves" with our peers, in our professions and societies. We leave money in our wills not so much out of charitable feelings as much as that we want our names to be engraved in bronze and hewn in stone. And how we forget that peers die, professions change, societies vanish, bronze disintegrates and stone crumbles. Names of that sort are certainly not indestructible monuments. Listen to one poet who bemoans the loss of his name:

Alone I walked on the ocean sand/A pearly shell was in my hand;
I stooped and wrote upon the sand/My name, the year, the day.

As onward from the spot I passed/One lingering look behind I cast,
A wave came rolling high and fast/And washed my lines away.
The waves of time wash names of this kind away, indeed. Try as we will, if we remain each of us an illem be-divrei Torah, unrooted in Judaism, then we remain as well Peloni Almoni. Is it not better for us to immortalize our names in and through eternal Torah, so that G-d Himself will not know us other than as Peloni Almoni?

There is a custom which we do not practice but which Hasidic congregations do, which throws this entire matter into bold relief. The custom stems from the famous Shelah ha-Kadosh, Rabbi Isaiah Horowitz, who recommends that in order she-lo yishkah shemo le-Yom ha-Din, that our names not be forgotten on Judgment Day, we should recite a verse from the Bible related to the name at the end of the daily Shemoneh Esreh (Siddur ha-Shelah s.v. pesukim li-shemot anashim). There is a Biblical verse for every name. Thus my own is Nahum. And the verse I recite is from Isaiah, Nahamu nahamu ammi yomar Elokeikhem—console, console My people, says your G-d (Is. 40:1). My, what that makes of an ordinary name! Even as a child I was terrifically impressed with it—a job, a mission, a destiny: console your fellow man, your fellow Jews!

Let any man do that and no matter what his parents called him, G-d knows his name—it is not Peloni Almoni; it is an eternal verse which will be read and taken to the hearts of men until the end of days.

On this Yizkor Day, think back to those whom you will shortly memorialize: does he or she have a name in Torah—or must you unfortunately refer to Peloni Almoni a shadow of a memory about to vanish? How will we be remembered— not by children, not by friends, not by other men at all . . . but at Yom ha-Din, on the day of judgment, by G-d Himself? Will we distinguish ourselves with humility, so that our names will become merged with the glorious verse of Micah (6:8): Ve-hatznea lekhet im Elokekha, walk humbly with thy G-d? Or will we prove ourselves men and women of sincere consideration and kindness and love for others so that our names will be one with ve-ahava le-re'akha kamokha, love of neighbor (Lev. 19:18)? Or will we devote our finest efforts to the betterment of our people and effecting rapprochement between Jews and their Torah, so that our names will be beni bekhorai Yisrael, Israel is my firstborn (Ex. 4:22)? Will we delve to the limits of our mental capacity into the study of Torah, so that our names will be an etz hayyim hi la-mahazikin bah, a tree of eternal life to those that hold it (Prov. 3:18)? Or will we do none of these things, just be tov, good-natured men and women, with no special distinction in Torah, no real anchorage in Jewishness, and find that our lives have been spent in nothingness and that even G-d has no name for us, that we will be just plain Peloni Almoni?

On this Shavuot day, when we recall the giving of the Torah at Sinai, the “Mystery Man” of the Book of Ruth calls to us from the dim obscurity in which he has been shrouded: Do not do what I did. Do not be illem be-divrei Torah, mute and speechless when it comes to Torah. Do not end your lives in a puff of anonymity. Grasp the Tree of Life which is Torah. Live it. Practice it. Overcome all hardships and express it in every aspect of your life. Do not abandon it lest G-d will abandon you. Jump at this opportunity for immortality. In short: make a name for yourself—through Torah, and with G-d. © 2016 OU Press

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Rav Kook Torah

Shavuot: Revealing Our Inner Essence

The ultimate moment of glory for the Jewish people - their greatest hour - occurred as G-d revealed His Torah to them at Mount Sinai. The Israelites made an amazing proclamation: Na'aseh VeNishma - “We will do and we will listen to all that G-d has declared” (Ex. 24:7).

They promised two things: to do, and to listen. The order is crucial. They promised to keep the Torah, even before knowing why. The Midrash (Shabbat 88a) says that, in merit of this pledge of loyalty, the angels rewarded each Jew with two crowns. And a Heavenly Voice exclaimed, “Who revealed to My children this secret that is used by the angels?”

What was so special about this vow, “we will do and we will listen”? On the contrary, would not fulfilling mitzvot with understanding and enlightenment be a higher level of Torah observance? And why is this form of unquestioning allegiance a “secret used by the angels”?

Intuitive Knowledge

While wisdom is usually acquired through study and reflection, there exists in nature an intuitive knowledge that requires no formal education. The bee, for example, naturally knows the optimal geometric shape for building honeycomb cells. No bee has ever needed to register for engineering courses at MIT.

Intuitive knowledge also exists in the spiritual realm. Angels are sublime spiritual entities who do not need Torah studies in order to know how to serve G-d. Their holiness is ingrained in their very nature. It is only human beings, prone to being confused by pseudo-scientific indoctrination, who need to struggle in order to return to their pristine spiritual selves. For the Jews who stood at Mount Sinai, it was not only Torah and mitzvot that were revealed. They also discovered their own true, inner essence. They attained a sublime level of natural purity, and intuitively proclaimed, “we will do.” We will follow our natural essence, unhindered by any spurious, artificial mores.

(Gold from the Land of Israel, pp. 142-143. Adapted from Mo'adei HaRe'iyah p. 486)

See Also: Connecting to Torah Study

<http://www.israelnationalnews.com/Articles/Article.aspx/19009#.V1pMe7srIps>
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Shavuot: Humility is not weakness

How the labor of learning – unlike physical labor – can be anything but pleasant and wholesome.

Thursday, June 09, 2016

In the delightful book, “The Little Prince” by Antoine de Saint-Exupery, there is a scene in which the Little Prince takes credit for the sunrise itself, glorying in his work in bringing about the new day. We find this scene charming because we recognize in the Little Prince the innocence and astonishment of childhood. The delight in “causing the sun to rise” is wonderful in a child but it is tiresome and troubling when adults behave similarly.

As we near the holiday of Shavuot, celebrating the crowning event in the annals of our Peoplehood, the Giving of the Torah, we cannot help but think of Torah as spiritually uplifting and inspiring. After all, Torah is the medium through which G-d communicates with mortal man. It stands to reason that the more Torah we learn, know and understand, the more intimate our relationship with G-d; the more we study, the more uplifted and inspired. And yet, Rav Chanan seems to turn this thinking on its head in the Talmud (Sanhedrin 26b), “why is Torah referred to as toshiya? Because it mateshes kocho shel adam – Torah wears man out, it weakens man’s strength.” What? Poll serious Torah learners and they will undoubtedly report that long sessions of learning leave them upbeat and exhilarated. Hardly “weakened”. They are exuberant, not toshiya.

What is Rav Chanan saying? His comment has been troubling scholars for decades upon decades. Over 90 years ago, a R’ Moshe Frankel from New York took pen to paper and wrote to my grandfather, Rav Bezalel Ze v Shafran z'l asking him to please explain to him what Rav Chanan meant by his astonishing statement. R’ Frankel could not imagine how Torah could be exhausting. He could not understand how the labor of learning – unlike physical labor – could be anything but pleasant and wholesome. In response, my grandfather offered a novel interpretation of the comment (included in his Responsa R’baz, 3rd volume – Siman 40). I present it here with the fervent prayer that his Torah continues to be passed down and learned by my children, grandchildren and beyond...

His response to R’ Frankel begins with a citation of the Chavos Da’as on the verse in Bereishis (18:4) in which Abraham greets the three “guests” who came to visit soon after his bris. As the visitors approached, Abraham extends every lavish courtesy to them, establishing our understanding of

Hachnasas Orchim. He says to them, yukach nah meat mayim v'rachatzu ragleichem – let water be brought and wash your feet. The Talmud (Bava Metzia) quotes the guests, “Do you suspect that we are Arabs who worship the dust of their feet – ragleichem?” The Chavos Da’as reminds us that Rambam argues that the word regel used in Torah does not denote “foot/feet” but “cause” as in the verse where Jacob speaks directly and honestly to Laban, telling him not to exaggerate his worth and accomplishments, because what he has is because G-d blessed you l’ragli – because of me. Here it is clear that “regel” is the cause; G-d is saying “I am the regel”, I am the cause for your abundance. Similarly, the Arabs believed that their parnasa, their material accomplishments, came about as a result of their ragleichem – they believed that they were the cause for all they had and accomplished. Like the Little Prince, they believed that the sun rose by their smarts, toil, strength and hard work. But Abraham set them straight. He tells them to “wash your ragleichem”. He tells them to cleanse themselves of the foolishness of bowing down and worshipping the dust of your own doings! Never think, even for a moment, that all you have is a result of your doing! For the one who fails to recognize that all s/he has emanates from the First Cause has toiled for naught.

My grandfather teaches that now we can well understand Rav Chanan. Whether through the innocence of youth or the arrogance of age, most who experience success claim responsibility for that success. Without shame they declare, “kochi v’otzem yadi asah li et kol ha’chayil ha’zeh – It’s my doing; my strength and prowess has allowed me to accumulate all of this wealth...” “It’s all me!” So they believe, never giving a thought that were it not for the will of G-d their toil and effort would be in vain. They remain blind to the truth that success and failure, like the rising and falling of the sun, is a turning wheel. One invariably follows the other. But the one endowed with the wisdom of Torah, the spirit of G-d and yiras shomayim, the one who knows that it is G-d who grants him the koach la’asos chayil, the strength to succeed, he is the one rooted in truth. It is this man who readily admits and proclaims that Torah is toshiya. Why? Because it mateshes his strength. He knows it is not Torah learning that saps his strength or beats him down. Rather, as we learn from Abraham’s lesson to his guests, Torah teaches us not to attribute our success to our own strength. Therefore, the Torah’s outlook about parnasa detracts from/is mateshes one’s strength, meaning one’s belief that his strength is the cause for his success.

Yes, Torah beats down on me (mateshes). Why? So that I do not attribute my success to my own doing. To the student of Torah, “koach” does not mean strength (kochi v’otzem yadi - my strength) but to one’s sense of self. A student immersed in Torah will ultimately come to the realization that his entire existence and being depends solely on G-d.

As my grandfather concludes, “the holy ones among Israel believe in the First Cause, the Master Lord G-d, blessed be His name...”

The innocent and arrogant believe in themselves. The wise and the holy believe in G-d.

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Rabbi Dr. Eliyahu Safran is an educator, author and lecturer. His most recent book is “Mediations at Sixty: One Person, Under G-d, Indivisible,” published by KTAV Publishing House. He is the author of “Kos Eliyahu – Insights into the Haggadah and Pesach” which has been translated into Hebrew and published by Mosad HaRav Kook, Jerusalem.

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Why Dairy on Shavuot?

by Rabbi Shraga Simmons

Seven fascinating reasons for this popular custom.

Ahhh... the sumptuous delight of blintzes and cheesecake. Eating a dairy meal on Shavuot has become an enduring tradition. But what's the source for this? Here are seven fascinating reasons:

Reason #1

When the Jewish people received the Torah at Mount Sinai, included was special instructions for how to slaughter and prepare meat for eating. Until then, the Jews had not followed these laws, thus all their meat – plus the cooking pots – were now considered "not kosher." So the only alternative was to eat dairy, which requires no advance preparation.

This raises the question, however: Why didn't the Jews simply slaughter new animals, "kasher" their pots in boiling water (hagala), and cook fresh meat?

The answer is that the revelation at Sinai occurred on Shabbat, when slaughter and cooking are prohibited.

Another point to clarify: How were the Jews able to obtain milk on Shabbat, since milking an animal falls under the prohibited activity of mefarek?

The answer is that the Jews already had milk available from before Shabbat, which they had been using to feed the various animals that accompanied their journeys in the wilderness.

Reason #2

Torah is likened to milk, as the verse says, "Like honey and milk [the Torah] lies under your tongue" (Song of Songs 4:11). Just as milk has the ability to fully sustain the body of a human being (i.e. a nursing baby), so too the Torah provides all the "spiritual nourishment" necessary for the human soul.

Reason #3

The gematria (numerical value) of the Hebrew word for milk, chalav, is 40. We eat dairy foods on Shavuot to commemorate the 40 days that Moses spent on Mount Sinai receiving instruction in the entire Torah. (Moses spent an additional 40 days on Sinai, praying for forgiveness following the Golden Calf, and then a third set of 40 days before returning with a new set of stone tablets.)

The numerical value of chalav, 40, has further significance in that there were 40 generations from Moses who recorded the Written Torah, till the generation of Ravina and Rav Ashi who wrote the final version of the Oral Torah, the Talmud.

Further, the Talmud begins with the letter mem – gematria 40 – and ends with mem as well.

Reason #4

According to the Zohar, each one of the 365 days of the year corresponds to a specific one of the Torah's 365 negative commandments. Which mitzvah corresponds to the day of Shavuot?

The Torah says: "Bring Bikkurim (first fruits) to the G-d's Holy Temple; don't cook a kid in its mother's milk" (Exodus 34:26). Since the first day for bringing Bikkurim is on Shavuot (in fact, the Torah calls Shavuot "the holiday of Bikkurim"), the second half of that verse – referring to milk and meat – is the negative commandment corresponding to Shavuot day. Thus on Shavuot we eat two meals, one of milk and one of meat, taking care not to mix the two.

Interestingly, we are instructed not to use the same loaf of bread for a meat meal and then later at a milk meal, lest some of the meat substance had splattered on the bread.

Thus by eating two meals – one of milk and one of meat – we inevitably have two loaves. This corresponds to the special "Two Loaves" that were offered in the Temple on Shavuot.

Reason #5

An alternative name for Mount Sinai is Har Gav'nunim, the mountain of majestic peaks. The Hebrew word for cheese is gevina, etymologically related to Har Gav'nunim.

Further, the gematria of gevina (cheese) is 70, corresponding to the "70 faces of Torah."

Reason #6

Moses was born on the seventh day of Adar, and stayed at home for three months with his family, before being placed in the Nile River on the sixth of Sivan.

Moses was rescued by Pharaoh's daughter, who adopted Moses and took him to live in Pharaoh's palace. But right away a problem arose: what to feed the baby. In those days, there was no bottled baby formula, so when the birth mother wasn't available, the caretaker would have to hire a wet nurse. In the case of Moses, he kept refusing to nurse from Egyptian women. The Talmud explains that his mouth needed to be kept totally pure, as it would one day communicate directly with G-d. Finally Pharaoh's daughter found one woman who Moses agreed to nurse from – Yocheved, Moses' biological mother!

Appreciate the irony: Pharaoh's murderous decree against Jewish babies was specifically intended to prevent a new generation of Jewish leadership. So what happened instead? Moses, the upcoming great Jewish leader, was raised, educated and trained – right under Pharaoh's nose, in Pharaoh's own home, at Pharaoh's expense! And on top of it all, Moses' mother got paid a salary!

The eating of dairy foods on Shavuot commemorates this phenomenon in the early life of Moses, which occurred on the sixth of Sivan, the day on which Shavuot falls.

Reason #7

According to one commentator, that day at Sinai was the first time the Jews ate dairy products. There is a general prohibition of "eating a limb from a live animal" (ever min hachai), which logically should also include milk, the product of a live animal. Ever min hachai is actually one of the Seven Noahide Laws which the Jews observed prior to Sinai (and which has applied to all humanity since the days of Noah).

However, upon receiving the Torah, which refers to the Land of Israel as "flowing with milk and honey" (Exodus 3:18), dairy products became permitted to the Jews. In other words, at the same moment that their meat became prohibited, dairy became permitted. They ate dairy on that original Shavuot, and we do today, too.

If the Jews ate dairy for the first time at Mount Sinai, this raises the question how Abraham could have fed dairy products to his three guests (Genesis 18:8).

The answer requires a technical understanding of the prohibition of ever min hachai, "limb from a live animal." One way is to define a "limb" as a piece of meat which contains bones and/or sinews. It is this type of ever min hachai which has always been forbidden to non-Jews. This prohibition does not include milk, because although milk comes from a live animal, it does not contain bones or sinews. Hence, Abraham was permitted to feed milk to his non-Jewish guests.

There is a second, expanded definition of ever min hachai, which encompasses all products from a live animal -- including milk. It is this definition which is prohibited to Jews. Thus it was not until the giving of the Torah, with its reference to "land of milk and honey," that dairy products became permitted to Jews.

This distinction is spelled out clearly by the great Rabbi Shlomo Kluger, in "HaElef Lecha Shlomo" (Yoreh Deah 322).

Sources:

Reason #1: Mishnah Berurah 494:12; Talmud – Bechorot 6b; Rabbi Shlomo Kluger (HaElef Lecha Shlomo – YD 322)

Reason #2: Rabbi Meir of Dzikov – Imrei Noam

Reason #3: Deut. 10:10; Rav Menachem Mendel of Ropshitz

Reason #4: Talmud – Makkot 23b; Chidushei HaRim; Rema (OC 494:3, YD 88:2)

Reason #5: Psalms 68:16; Midrash – Bamidbar Rabba 13:15; Rebbe of Ostropole; Reb Naftali of Ropshitz; Rabbi Dovid Meisels

Reason #6: Talmud – Sotah 12b; Yalkut Yitzchak

Reason #7: Rabbi Shlomo Kluger (HaElef Lecha Shlomo – YD 322)

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Ohr Somayach :: Shavuot

Rabbi Yehuda Spitz

The Halachic Challenges of the Cheesecake

For the week ending 23 May 2015 / 5 Sivan 5775

The upcoming holiday of Shavuot, aside from its most common name, has several others: Chag HaKatzir (The Holiday of the Harvest), Atzeres (Assembly), Yom HaBikkurim (Day of the offering of the first fruits), and Zman Mattan Toraseinu (The Time of the Giving of the Torah). Yet, in Israel, it has gained a new moniker: Chag HaGevinah - The Holiday of the Cheese! Amazingly, and only in Israel, will you find a Jewish custom that has become so commercialized. Although no one really minds paying a lot less for all the various cheeses on sale during the weeks leading up to Shavuot, still, the idea that a "holiday" can be commercially sponsored (by the cheese companies, no less), should give us pause.

Interestingly, having cheesecake on Shavuot is one minhag with which many non-practicing Jews are stringent! Have you ever met someone who turned down a piece of cheesecake? But where does this time-honored traditional custom of consuming cheesecake on Shavuot come from?

Korban Cheesecake?!

It seems that one of the earliest mentions of such a minhag is by the great Rema, Rav Moshe Isserles, the authoritative decisor for all Ashkenazic Jewry, who cites the 'prevailing custom' of eating dairy items specifically on Shavuot (Orach Chaim 494, 3). Although there are many rationales and reasons opined through the ages to explain this custom[1], the Rema himself provides an enigmatic one, to be a commemoration of the special Korban,

the Shte HaLechem[2] (Two Loaves) offered exclusively on Shavuot during the times of the Beis Hamikdash.

However, since the connection between dairy food and a bread offering seems tenuous, the Machatzis HaShekel[3] (Orach Chaim 494, 7 s.v. h"h) offers a remarkable glimpse as to the Rema's intent. The halacha states (Shulchan Aruch Yoreh Deah 89, 4 and relevant commentaries) that one may not use the same loaf of bread at both a dairy meal and a meat meal. The reason for this is that there may be some (possibly unnoticed) residue on the bread, and thus one might come to eat a forbidden mixture of milk and meat[4].

Therefore, in order to properly commemorate this unique Korban which had two loaves of bread, one should have a separate dairy meal aside from the traditional meat meal one has on Yom Tov. This way, he will be mandated to have separate breads for each of these meals, as the challah meant for the dairy meal cannot be used for the meat meal and vice versa.

It is well known that our tables are compared to the Mizbe'ach and our food to Korbanos[5]. Therefore, serving a food item at a meal is considered an appropriate commemoration for a Korban. Consequently, by having an additional dairy meal, the outcome is a suitable commemoration for this unique Korban, as now on Shavuot, two separate distinct breads are being served. In fact, the venerated Rav Moshe Feinstein (Shu"t Igros Moshe Orach Chaim vol. 1, 160) cites this explanation as the proper one for maintaining two separate types of meals on Shavuot, one milky and one meaty.

Terrific! So now we can appreciate that by eating cheesecake on Shavuot, we are actually commemorating a special Korban! But before we sink our teeth into a luscious calorie-laden (it can't be sinful - it's commemorating a Korban!) cheesecake, we should realize that, potentially, there might be another halachic issue involved: the prohibition against baking dairy bread. Dairy Dilemma

Bread has been mankind's basic staple since time immemorial[6]. Therefore, Chazal worried that an unsuspecting person might mistake dairy bread for plain pareve bread and eat it together with meat. He would thus inadvertently violate the prohibition of eating a forbidden mixture of milk and meat. They thereby decreed (Gemara Pesachim 30a and 36a) that one may not bake dairy bread unless certain criteria are met[7]: either changing the shape of the dough prior to baking[8] (known as making a shinui), thereby making it instantly recognizable to all[9] as milky[10], or baking dairy bread exclusively in small quantities.[11] The same prohibition and exclusions apply to meaty bread as well, due to bread's propensity to be eaten with a dairy meal.

Bullseye!

The better is called by Chazal (Gemara Pesachim 36a) "k'eyn tura" (like the eye of an ox; possibly the source for the expression 'bullseye'). Although this expression is debated by the Rishonim, with Rashi (ad loc. s.v. k'eyn tura) explaining that it means a small amount (seemingly taking the bull's-eye idiom literally), while the Rif (Chullin 38a), Rashba (Toras HaBayis HaKatzir Bayis 3, Sha'ar 4, 86a), and Rambam (Hilchos Ma'achlos Asuros Ch. 9, 22) maintain that it is referring to a changed shape that makes it obvious to all that it is dairy or meaty, nonetheless, the Shulchan Aruch (Yoreh Deah 97, 1) rules that both are acceptable ways to ensure that the dairy bread will not be mixed-up.

Even so, there is a practical difference between Sefardic and Ashkenazic psak. According to the Shulchan Aruch (ibid.) the small amount of milchig bread that is permissible to make is only enough for one meal. This is how Sefardim rule [See Ben Ish Chai (Year 2, Parshas Shelach 17), and Kaf Hachaim (Yoreh Deah 97, 7)]. The Rema (ad loc. & Toras Chatas 36, 9), however, is a bit more lenient, allowing an amount necessary for one day, meaning a 24-hour period. This is the custom that Ashkenazim follow. [See Pri Megadim (ad loc. Sifsei Daas 1, s.v. v'im), Chavas Daas (ad loc. Biurim 3), Yad Yehuda (ad loc. Pirush HaKatzir 6), Aruch Hashulchan (ad loc. 4),

Atzei HaOlah (Hilchos Basar BeChalav 12, 1) and Darchei Teshuva (ad loc. 17)].

Let Them Eat (Cheese)Cake!

Although several authorities extend this prohibition to include other baked goods, such as cookies and bourekas [12], which, if baked milky, might be mistakenly eaten with meat, nevertheless, the prevailing ruling is that the prohibition only applies to bread [13]. Even so, aside from the signs in the bakeries proclaiming which items are dairy and which are pareve, it is nonetheless a widespread practice throughout Israel that bakeries form the dairy baked goods (cheese bourekas, anyone?) in a triangular shape and the pareve ones in a rectangular shape as an extra safeguard against mix-ups. Since at busy bakeries the potential for mistakes is quite high, this is done as an added precaution, even though m'ikar hadin it is deemed unnecessary by most authorities.

So...does this ruling affect our beloved cheesecake in any way?

Actually, not much. In a typical cheesecake, since the cheese aspect of it is quite conspicuous [14], it would be considered as if produced with a changed shape from standard dough. Additionally, cheesecake is universally recognized as... containing cheese (!), and thus known world-wide as being dairy [15]. No one would make a mistake confusing cheesecake with pareve bread. Therefore, even according to the opinions of those authorities who maintain that the prohibition of dairy bread extends to cakes, even so, they all agree it would be permissible to make plenty of cheesecake for Shavuos, even in large quantities.

Thankfully, when it comes time to indulge in a piece of traditional cheesecake on the holiday of Shavuos, we can "have our cake and eat it too", both in the literal sense as well as in the spiritual sense; knowing we have fulfilled the halachic requirements and are even commemorating a unique Korban.

Postscript: Another common question related to cheesecake concerns the proper bracha to recite, whether Mezonos or Shehakol. This topic is discussed at length in many recent sefarim including V'zos HaBracha, V'sein Bracha, and Rabbi Binyomin Forst's Pischei Halacha: The Laws of Brachos. It seems that the consensus of contemporary authorities is that the correct bracha is subjective, depending on the makeup of each individual cheesecake and its crust, based on the laws of primary and secondary food (Ikar and Tafel) [16]. If the crust is indeed deemed significant and adds necessary taste and crunch, many poskim maintain that two separate brachos be recited. One should ascertain a final ruling on the matter from his or her own local halachic authority.

[1] This topic has been addressed by many - see the relevant commentaries to the Rema's comment, as well as Rav Yaakov Kamenetsky zt"l's Emes L'Yaakov on Tur / Shulchan Aruch (Orach Chaim 494 s.v. v'nohagin) and Rav Shlomo Zalman Auerbach zt"l's Halichos Shlomo (Moadim vol. 2, Ch. 12, Orchos Halacha 1 and 35, and Dvar Halacha 10). There is even a recent sefer, Meta'amei Moshe, which lists 149 (!) different reasons for this minhag. Actually, several Rishonim, including the Kol Bo (72 and in Orchos Chaim - Tefillas HaMo'adim 13) and the Melamed HaTalmidim (pg. 121b) predate the Rema on this by several centuries, yet their mention is that of eating 'milk and honey' together in order to be yotzei the pasuk in Shir HaShirim (Ch. 4, 11) 'dvash v'chalav tachas leshonecha', that the Torah is compared to milk and honey. Interestingly, other Rishonim, Rav Avigdor HaTzarfati (pg. 478) and Rav Yitzchak Isaac Tirnau in his Sefer HaMinhagim (Hilchos Shavuos, Haghos 49) both write a different reason to eat milchigs on Shavuos. The pasuk that describes the holiday of Shavuos (Bamidbar, Parshas Pinchas Ch. 28, 26) states that one should bring a 'm incha ch adasha la'Hashem B'ashvoseichem' of which the first letters spell - 'meichalav' - with milk, implying that milk products should be eaten on Shavuos. This minhag is also mentioned by the Terumas Hadeshen (Leket Yosher pg. 103) and Maharil (Minhagim pg. 85), yet, it was not until the Rema codified this minhag in halacha that it became widespread. See also Rabbi Eliezer Brodt's excellent recent 'The Mysteries of Milchigs'.

[2] See Shemos (Parshas Ki Sisa) Ch. 34, verse 32; Vayikra (Parshas Emor) Ch. 23, verses 15 - 22; Bamidbar (Parshas Pinchas) Ch. 28, verse 26. This is the first Temple offering from the new wheat crop.

[3] This is also cited by the Mishna Berura (Orach Chaim 493, 14 & 15) and Kaf Hachaim (ad loc. 63).

[4] See also Rav Chaim Falag'i's Kaf Hachaim (Ch. 24, 20) and Yalkut Me'am Loez (Shemos, Parshas Mishpatim pg. 890 s.v. basar achar gevina) and Shu"t Igros Moshe (Yoreh Deah vol. 1, 38) for the parameters of this halacha.

[5] See Gemara Brachos (55a), Beis Yosef (Orach Chaim 167, quoting the Shibolei Leket 141), Rema (ad loc.), Mishna Berura (ad loc. 30) and Shla'h (Shaar HaOsiyos, Eimek Bra cha 66). This was addressed at length in an article titled 'Salting With Sugar'.

[6] Devarim (Parshas Eikev) Ch. 8, verse 3: "Ki lo al halechem levado yichyeh ha'adam".

[8] According to the vast majority of poskim this leniency only applies if the change was made prior to the baking. See Pri Megadim (Yoreh Deah 97, Sifsei Daas 1 s.v. v'im), Pischei Teshuva (ad loc. 3), Gilyon Maharsha (ad loc. 2), Chavas Daas (ad loc. Chiddushim 5 & Biurim 3), Arugas HaBosem (ad loc.), Maharsham (Daas Torah ad loc. 1), Ben Ish Chai (Year 2, Parshas Shelach 17 & Shu"t Rav Pealim vol. 2, Yoreh Deah 11), Yad Yehuda (ad loc. Pirush HaAruch 3), Zer Zahav (on the Issur V'Hetter 40, 4), Levushei Srad (Yoreh Deah 41, 139), Ksav Sofer (Shu"t Yoreh Deah end 61), and Aruch Hashulchan (Yoreh Deah 97, 9). See also footnote 11.

[9] Shu"t Mahari"t (vol. 2, 18), Pischei Teshuva (Yoreh Deah 97, 3), Pri Chadash (ad loc. 1), Pri Toar (ad loc. 2 - who adds that this is an issue only lechatchila), Chochmas Adam (50, 3), Aruch Hashulchan (ad loc. 7), and Kaf Hachaim (ad loc. 12). They all maintain that the shinui made to allow dairy bread must be known to all, and not just the local townspeople. The dissenting opinion is that of the Yad Yehuda (ad loc. Pirush HaKatzet 7), who argues that we need not concern ourselves with visiting guests for this halacha. The Kreisi U'Pleisi (ad loc. Kreisi 2) mentions similarly (although he notes that he protested), that since in his town every bakery baked with milk and everyone knew about it, it was considered a hekker. He concludes that it would be preferable not to rely on this, though.

[10] There is an interesting debate on "biskugies", apparently a type of bread that was commonly sold as pareve, with the Mahar"i Chagiz (Shu"t Halachos Ketanos vol. 1, 56) writing briefly that since they are a type of bread and everyone assumes they are pareve, they also fall in the category of the dairy bread prohibition. This is according to the understanding of the Rav Yaakov Emden (Shu"t Sheilas Ya'avetz vol. 1, 62), Chida (Shiyurei Bracha Yoreh Deah 97, 1), and Zivchei Tzedek (Yoreh Deah 97, 8), and not like the Mahar"i's own son, who wrote (by amending and adding a few words to his father's responsum) that his father meant to permit them. The Ya'avetz himself concludes that he does not know what "biskugies" actually are, but if they are, as he suspects, biscuits or cookies, then they are permitted to be baked dairy as they are not an actual bread. See also footnotes 12 and 13.

[11] Although most authorities are stringent even if someone violated the prohibition accidentally, (as mentioned in footnote 8), there are those however, who are lenient if a tiny amount of milk accidentally spilled on bread [see Shu"t Aish Das (end 12); Shu"t Shoel U'Meishiv (Tinyana vol. 4, end 189); Nachlas Tzvi (Yoreh Deah 97, 1); Shu"t Nefesh Chaya (36); and Imrei Binah (Hilchos Basar BeChalav 13)]. The Kreisi U'Pleisi (Yoreh Deah 97, Pleisi 1 s.v. shamaati, Kreisi 3) quotes his grandfather as allowing one who made a large batch of dairy bread without a shinui to divide it up into small quantities and give it out to various households. Although the Chamudei Daniel (Taaruvo vol. 2, 18) agrees with this, nevertheless most authorities do not (see footnote 8) and rule that it is prohibited. The Kreisi U'Pleisi himself concludes that it is tzarich iyun to be lenient with this, and only allows its use as a snif lehakef. Yet, the Yad Yehuda (Yoreh Deah 97, Pirush HaAruch 3), Chochmas Adam (50, 5 & Binat Adam 51; in some editions 70), Zivchei Tzedek (Yoreh Deah 97, 6), Atzei HaOlah (Hilchos Basar BeChalav 12, 3), Aruch Hashulchan (Yoreh Deah 97, 9), and Kaf Hachaim (ad loc. 9 and 11), rule that in case of great loss and it was done accidentally, one may indeed rely on this. This is also the ruling of the B'tzeil HaChochma (Shu"t vol. 6, 84, 3 and 4) and the Maadanei Hashulchan (3 and in his Shu"t Maadanei Melachim 123). The Ksav Sofer (Shu"t Yoreh Deah end 61) maintains that a baker is allowed to mass produce dairy bread on condition to exclusively sell a small amount to each family, as that is the normal method of selling. See also Rav Yisrael Yaakov Fischer zt"l's Shu"t Even Yisrael (vol. 9, 67). And Rav Shammai Kehas Gross's Shu"t Shevet HaKehasi (vol. 5, 128).

[12] Including the Taz (Yoreh Deah 97, 1), Pri Toar (ad loc. 2), Erech Hashulchan (ad loc. 2), Zivchei Tzedek (ibid.), and Ben Ish Chai (ibid.).

[13] Including the Mahari"t (Shu"t ibid.), Pri Chadash (Yoreh Deah 97, 1), Minchas Yaakov (60, 3), Chavas Daas (Yoreh Deah 97, 1), Chida (Shiyurei Bracha Yoreh Deah 97, 3), Pischei Teshuva (ad loc. end 3), Yeshuos Yaakov (ad loc. 1), Ya'avetz (Shu"t ibid.), Machatzis HaShekel (Yoreh Deah 97 s.v. ayin), Chochmas Adam (50, 3 & 7), Atzei HaOlah (ibid. 4), and Aruch Hashulchan (Yoreh Deah 97, 2). See also Rav Yisrael Belsky's Shu"t Shulchan HaLevi (vol. 1, Ch. 22, 7 and 8).

[14] The Be'er Sheva (Shu"t 32) maintains as long as some cheese is noticeable, it is considered an adequate shinui to allow it to be made. This is also cited by the Pri Chadash (Yoreh Deah 97, end 3), Pri Megadim (ad loc. Sifsei Daas 1), Zivchei Tzedek (ad loc. 10), Aruch Hashulchan (ad loc. 5; who calls it "Minhag Yisrael Torah"), and Kaf Hachaim (ad loc. 1). Although the Atzei HaOlah (Basar BeChalav 12, Chukey Chaim 1) is uneasy about a small amount of cheese being noticed, and others, including the Gilyon Maharsha (ibid.) and Chamudei Daniel (ibid.) maintain that said shinui must affect the entire dairy bread, nevertheless, where it would be recognizable throughout, as a cheesecake is, it would definitely be permitted.

[15] Mahari"t (Shu"t ibid.), Pri Chadash (Yoreh Deah 97, 1), Ben Ish Chai (ibid.), Yad Yehuda (ad loc. Pirush HaKatzet 7), Aruch Hashulchan (ad loc. 8), Kaf Hachaim (ad loc. 12, s.v. u'va'ir). See also footnote 9 - If it is recognizable to all, it is considered a proper shinui.

[16] For more on this topic see Rav Nissan Kaplan's Shalmei Nissan (Perek Keitzad Mevorchin Ch. 80 - 84), Rabbi Mordechai Zev Trenk's Brachos Basics (Ch. 4), and Rabbi Avi Wiesenfeld's discussion on the DinOnline.org website: http://www.dinonline.org/2011/04/05/q-a-guide-to-the-halachos-of-brachos-ikar-tafel/#identifier_72_10407 - Par. Cheesecake.

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Lezechus Shira Yaffa bas Rochel Miriam v'chol yotzei chalatzeha for a yeshua teikif umiyad. Rabbi Yehuda Spitz serves as the Sho'el U' Meishiv and Rosh Chabura of the Ohr Lagolol Halacha Kollel at Yeshivas Ohr Somayach in Yerushalayim.

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