

BS"D



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## INTERNET PARSHA SHEET ON SHAVUOS & Naso - 5764

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From: TorahWeb.org [torahweb@torahweb.org] Sent: May 19, 2004 Subject: Rav Hershel Schachter - Why Was the Torah Forced Upon Us?

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RAV HERSHEL SCHACHTER

### WHY WAS THE TORAH FORCED UPON US?

Before G-d was prepared to give His Torah to the Jewish people He first wanted to know whether they were prepared to accept it. With great enthusiasm the Jews expressed their desire to both accept and observe all of the laws of the Torah. Then according to Talmudic tradition (Shabbos 88a), G-d pressured the Jewish people to accept the Torah, and forced it upon them against their wishes.

The commentaries on the Talmud all wonder, why it was necessary to force the Torah upon the Jews if they had already enthusiastically expressed their willingness to accept it? The Medrash Tanchuma (to Parshas Noach) elaborates upon this aggada and distinguishes between the different parts of the Torah. The people were prepared to accept both G-d's written Torah, and all the halachos l'Moshe miSinai - transmitted directly from G-d. Their response to Moshe was that "kol asher deiber Hashem na'aseh" - that all that G-d had said we are prepared to accept. But the bulk of the Oral Torah is really what the Talmud and the Rambam refer to as "divrei Sofrim", halachos which were developed over the centuries with much rabbinic input. The rabbis were licensed to employ the various "middos shehaTorah nidrehses bohem" to read (so to speak) "in between the lines" of the Torah in order to present a fuller picture of each of the mitzvos. This the Jews at Har Sinai were not prepared to accept. They felt that this was not Divine! This is a human Torah, and all humans can err. Why should they agree to be subservient to the idea of other human beings? Who says that another is so much more intelligent than I? Each Jew should be entitled to interpret the law according to his own understanding!

And it was this part of the Torah that G-d had to force upon us. Whether we like it or not, G-d expects us to follow the positions set forth by the rabbis in interpreting the Torah. Not until years later, after the story of Purim occurred, did the Jewish people as a whole fully accept this aspect of rabbinic authority. It was at that time that Ezra and the Anshei Kneses Hag'dolah set up the entire system of the Torah sheb'al peh as we know it today. They formulated the text for all blessings and prayers, kiddush and havdalah, the system of thirty-nine categories of melacha, etc., along with many rabbinic enactments. Klal Yisroel at the period of the beginning of the second temple wholeheartedly accepted all of these formulations and innovations of their rabbonim.[1]

This is the significance of the expression we use (from the Rambam's formulation), that we believe (ani maamin) that the Torah as it is observed today, is an accurate transmission of that Divine Torah which

was given to Moshe Rabbeinu. This added phrase, "as it is observed today", implies exactly this idea - to include all of those halachos where there was rabbinic input. We have "emunas chachomim". We believe that throughout all the generations there was an invisible Divine assistance given to the rabbis to develop the halacha in a correct fashion. The Talmud (Menachos 29b) records an aggada that when G-d showed Moshe Rabbeinu a vision of the rabbis of future generations, Moshe became troubled with Rabbi Akiva. By the time of Rabbi Akiva, the halacha had already so developed, it seemed to Moshe as if this was not really the Torah he was given. Moshe was very upset over the distortion, until he heard a student ask Rabbi Akiva - what is the source of a certain halacha, and Rabbi Akiva responded that that was a "halacha leMoshe miSinai". In other words, all of the Torah, even in the days of Rabbi Akiva as well as today, is a legitimate development of Toras Moshe, based on the use of the "middos", and therefore everything is implicitly "included" in what was given to Moshe. He was given the text with the "middos", and when applying these "middos" to the text, all the details of the halacha as we know it today follow automatically. The "middos" simply guide that rabbi in their task of reading "in between the lines", in order to obtain a fuller picture of each mitzvah.

In the bracha one recites after an aliyah we praise G-d for having given us his Toras Emes, which is a reference to the text of the Torah shebichsav, as well as for having implanted in our midst ("nota besochenu") the ability to further develop the "living" Torah ("chayei olam") with the aid of the "middos" and through rabbinic input (see Orach Chaim 149:10 and Gra nos. 27, 28). This bracha was composed after the period of the Anshei Kneses Hag'dolah, at which time Klal Yisroel came to realize - without any coercion - the immense value of the "divrei sofrim"; that the ability to have rabbinic input is what keeps the Torah in constant touch with an ever-changing world.[2]

Of course, the application of those "middos" is a science unto itself, which is only mastered by a small handful of qualified individuals in each generation. And the new additional halachos that read "in between the lines" have to "fit in" with "the spirit" of the rest of the Torah, which again can only be fully sensed by those few qualified individuals who have a proper sense of what "the spirit of the law" is!

1. See essays by Rav Moshe Zvi Neriah in Meorot Neriah, Purim, pp. 164-171 2. See Masechet Sofrim(16,5): Id the entire Torah would have been committed to writing, and would have been (so to speak) "etched in stone", and there would not have been any rabbinic input, the rabbis of the later generations would not have had any way to keep the "living" Torah in touch with the changing World.

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From: RABBI YISSOCHER FRAND [ryfrand@torah.org] Sent: May 20, 2004 To: ravfrand@torah.org Subject: Rabbi Frand on "RavFrand" List - Rabbi Frand on Parshas Bamidbar

These divrei Torah were adapted from the hashkafa portion of Rabbi Yissocher Frand's Commuter Chavrusah Tapes on the weekly portion: Tape # 418, - Shavuos Issues -- Late Ma'ariv / Learning All Night.

Naomi Taught Rus the Fundamental of Judaism: Get Serious Many of the laws relating to the process of conversion are learned from the book of Rus. Rus told Naomi "Do not pressure me to leave you, to turn back and not follow you. For wherever you go, I will go; where you lodge, I will lodge; your people are my people and your G-d is my G-d; where you die, I will die, and there I will be buried." [Rus 1:16].

Rashi quotes the teaching of the Sages that at this point, Naomi saw that Rus was totally sincere, and she started teaching her the laws of Judaism. Our Sages teach that each phrase in the quoted pasuk is an allusion to a certain set of halachic principles. "I will go where you will go" alludes to the law of Techum Shabbos [the maximum distance once is allowed to

travel beyond the city limits on Shabbos]. "I will lodge where you will lodge" alludes to the prohibition of Yichud [impermissibility of sharing private quarters with a forbidden member of the opposite sex]. "Where you die, I will die" alludes to the forms of execution meted out by a Jewish Court.

However, the Medrash interprets something different in this dialogue. The Medrash agrees that we learn from this pasuk [verse] that Naomi was teaching Rus the unique laws of Judaism. However, according to the Medrash, Naomi was teaching her daughter-in-law that "Jewish women do not go to non-Jewish theaters and circuses." Rus responded, "I will go where you will go."

This Medrash is puzzling. One would hardly expect that the first thing that Naomi would tell a potential convert to Judaism is that Jews do not go to the theater and circuses. Even given that the theaters spoken about in the Medrash are not totally equivalent to our theaters and the circuses are not exactly referring to the Ringling Brothers Barnum & Bailey, nevertheless this is a strange curriculum for Judaism 101.

Why is abstaining from going to the theaters and circuses so fundamental an idea, that the Medrash uses this example to illustrate Naomi's introductory lesson to her daughter-in-law regarding the basics of her new religion?

The Nachalas Yosef, a wonderful work on Megillas Rus, suggests an answer based on a Gemara in tractate Avodah Zarah [18b]. The Talmud refers to theaters and circuses as 'moshav leitzim' [places where scoffers hang out]. The question then becomes, does scoffing and mocking, in fact, represent the antithesis of Judaism? The answer is most emphatically yes.

The opening verse of the book of Tehillim says: "Praiseworthy is the man who walked not in the counsel of the wicked and stood not in the path of the sinful, and sat not in the session of scorners". The next pasuk continues: "But his desire is in the Torah of Hashem, and in His Torah he meditates day and night." Thus we see that the polar opposite of desiring the Torah of Hashem is sitting in a moshav leitzim [session of scorners].

A Moshav Leitzim is not a comedy house. It is not a theater where people make jokes. A Moshav Leitzim reflects a lack of seriousness about life. It is a way of life that says that the primary purpose of life is to 'have a good time'. This is what theaters and circuses represent and this is what Naomi cautioned Rus against.

"Rus, if you want to become a Jewess, the first thing that you must know about Judaism is that life is serious. There is a goal and purpose and mission in life. Life is not a joke. Life is not having a good time. It is serious business."

Everything flows from this idea. It is a stark distinction: The 'session of scoffers' versus 'the Torah of Hashem is his desire'. It is an 'either-or'. You cannot have both. That is Judaism 101.

"Before we can talk about anything else -- Shabbos, Yichud, Sanhedrin - you have to accept one thing: Life is meaningful. You are here for a purpose. If you are willing to accept that, Rus, then we can talk about Judaism."

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From: Jeffrey Gross [jgross@torah.org] Sent: Tuesday, May 18, 2004  
2:06 AM To: weekly-halacha@torah.org Subject: Weekly Halacha -  
Bamidbar/Shavuot  
WEEKLY-HALACHA FOR 5764

BY RABBI DONIEL NEUSTADT Rav of Young Israel in Cleveland Heights

A discussion of Halachic topics. For final rulings, consult your Rav  
BIRCHOS HA-SHACHAR ON SHAVUOS MORNING

The widespread custom of staying awake the first night of Shavuot to study Torah presents a halachic problem - what to do about four of the morning blessings, Birchos ha-shachar, which cannot be recited unless one slept during the night. The other sixteen blessings may be recited as usual(1), but the following four blessings present a problem:

AL NETILAS YADAYIM -The Rishonim offer two basic reasons for the Talmudic law(2) of washing our hands in the morning and then reciting the proper blessing:

1.The Rosh tells us that washing is necessary because a person's hands move around in his sleep and will inevitably touch some unclean part of the body. 2.The Rashba says that since each one of us becomes a biryah chadashah -a "new person" -each morning, we must sanctify ourselves anew in preparation to serve Hashem. This sanctification is similar to that of a kohen who washes his hands before performing the avodah in the Beis ha-Mikdash. [In addition to these two reasons, there is still another reason for washing one's hands in the morning - because of ruach ra'ah, the spirit of impurity that rests on one's body at night and does not leave the hands until water is poured over them three times(3). Indeed, touching various limbs or organs of the body is prohibited before hand-washing, due to the danger which is caused by the spirit of impurity(4). This third reason alone, however, is insufficient to warrant a blessing(5), since a blessing is never recited on an act which is performed in order to ward off danger (6).]

Does one who remains awake all night long need to wash his hands in the morning? If we follow the Rosh's reason, then washing is not necessary, for as long as one remains awake he knows that his hands remained clean. If we follow the Rashba's reason, however, washing may be required, since in the morning one becomes a "new person," whether he slept or not(7). [In addition, it is debatable if the spirit of impurity that rests on the hands is caused by the nighttime hours - regardless of whether or not one slept- or if it rests upon the hands only during sleep.(8)]

Since this issue remains unresolved, the Rama suggests a compromise: washing is indeed required, as the Rashba holds, but a blessing is not recited, in deference to the view of the Rosh. Not all the poskim agree with the Rama's compromise. In their view, the blessing should be recited(9). Since we again face a difference of opinion, it is recommended that one of the following options be exercised:

1. Immediately after alos amud ha-shachar, one should relieve himself and then wash his hands, followed by Al netilas yadayim and Asher yatzar. In this case, all poskim agree that washing is required and a blessing is recited(10). This is the preferred option. 2. One should listen - with intent to be yotzei -as another person, who did sleep, recites the blessing.

BIRCHOS HA-TORAH -The poskim debate whether one who remains awake the entire night(11) is required to recite Birchos ha-Torah the next morning. Some authorities do not require it, since they hold that the previous day's blessings are still valid. In their view, unless a major interruption - such as a night's sleep - occurs, yesterday's blessings remain in effect. Others hold that Birchos ha-Torah must be said each morning regardless of whether or not one slept, similar to all other Birchos ha-shachar which are said in the morning, whether one slept or not. According to the Mishnah Berurah(12), this issue remains unresolved and the following options are recommended:

1. One should listen - with intent to be yotzei - as another person, who did sleep, recites the blessing. This should be followed by each person reciting yevorechecha and eilu devarim, so that the blessings are followed immediately by some Torah learning. 2. While reciting the second blessing before Kerias Shema - Ahavah Rabbah - one should

have the intention to be yotzei Birchos ha-Torah as well. In this case, he must learn some Torah immediately after Shemoneh Esrei.

There are two other options available: 1. The poskim agree that if one slept (at least half an hour) during the day of erev Shavuos, he may recite Birchos ha-Torah on Shavuos morning even though he did not sleep at all during the night(13). 2. While reciting Birchos ha-Torah on erev Shavuos, one may clearly stipulate that his blessings should be in effect only until the next morning. In this case, he may recite the blessings on Shavuos morning although he did not sleep(14). If one did not avail himself of any of these options and Birchos ha-Torah were not recited, one may recite them upon awakening from his sleep on Shavuos morning (after davening).

**ELOKAI NESHAMAH and Ha-MA'AVIR SHEINAH** Here, too, there are differences of opinion among the poskim as to whether one who remains awake throughout the night should recite these blessings. The Mishnah Berurah(15) rules that it is best to hear these blessings from another person who slept. If no such person is available, many poskim rule that these blessings may be recited even by one who did not sleep(16).

**IN ACTUAL PRACTICE, WHAT SHOULD WE DO?** As stated earlier, all poskim agree that the other sixteen morning blessings may be recited by one who did not sleep at all during the night. Nevertheless, it has become customary in some shuls that one who slept recites all twenty morning blessings for the benefit of all those who did not sleep. Two details must be clarified concerning this practice: \* Sometimes it is difficult to clearly hear every word of the blessing being recited. [Missing one word can sometimes invalidate the blessing.] If that happens, it is important to remember that sixteen of the twenty blessings may be recited by each individual whether he slept or not, as outlined above. \* The sixteen blessings which may be recited by each individual should not be heard from another person unless a minyan is present. This is since some poskim hold that the obligation of Birchos ha-shachar is discharged only by hearing them from another person in the presence of a minyan(17).

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**FOOTNOTES:** 1 Rama O.C. 46:8. 2 Berachos 15a and 60b. 3 The source for the "spirit of impurity" is the Talmud (Shabbos 108b; Yoma 77b) and the Zohar, quoted by the Beis Yosef O.C. 4. 4 O.C. 4:3. 5 Mishnah Berurah 4:8. 6 Aruch ha-Shulchan 4:4 based on Rambam, Hilchos Berachos 6:2. 7 The rationale for this is: 1) Lo pelug, which means that once the Sages ordained that washing the hands is necessary because one is considered a "new person", they did not differentiate between an individual who slept and one who did not (Beis Yosef quoted by Mishnah Berurah 4:28); 2) The blessing was established to reflect chiddush ha-olam, which means that since the "world" as a whole is renewed each morning, it is incumbent upon the individual to sanctify himself and prepare to serve Hashem each morning; whether he, personally, was "renewed" is immaterial (Beir Halachah quoting the Rashba). 8 Mishnah Berurah 4:28. 9 Ruling of Aruch ha-Shulchan 4:12. 10 Mishnah Berurah 4:30 and Beir Halachah 494:1. This should be done immediately after alos amud ha-shachar in order to remove the spirit of impurity; O.C. 4:14. 11 Even one who falls asleep during his learning [while leaning on a shtender or a table, etc.] does not say Birchos ha-Torah upon awakening; Kaf ha-Chayim 47:27. 12 47:28. Many other poskim, though, rule that Birchos ha-Torah may be said even by one who did not sleep at all; see Birkei Yosef 46:12; Shulchan Aruch Harav 47:7; Aruch ha-Shulchan 47:23; Kaf ha-Chayim 47:26. 13 R' Akiva Eiger quoted by Mishnah Berurah 47:28. Harav C. Kanievsky, however, reports that the Chazon Ish did not agree with this ruling (Ishei Yisrael Hilchos Tefillah, pg. 719). 14 Keren L'David 59 and Luach Eretz Yisrael quoting the Aderes (quoted in Piskei Teshuvos O.C. 494:6). 15 46:24. This is also the ruling of Chayei Adam 8:9 and Kitzur Shulchan Aruch 7:5. 16 Shulchan Aruch Harav 46:7; Kaf ha-Chayim 46:49; Aruch ha-Shulchan 46:13; Misgeres ha-Shulchan 2:2. 17 Mishnah Berurah 6:14. In addition, see Kisvei Harav Henkin 2:7, who maintains that since many of the blessings are written in the first person, they must be recited by each individual; listening to them being recited by another person is not adequate.

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Subject: SHIUR HARAV SOLOVEICHIK ZTL ON MATTAN TORAH

Shiur HaRav Soloveichik ZT"L on Mattan Torah  
(Shiur date: 6/6/78)

Parshas Shemos (Chapter 24) relates how HaShem told Moshe to climb the mountain alone and how Moshe told the people the words and laws of HaShem and how all the people answered (Vayaan Kol Haam Kol Echad) with one voice "All the things that HaShem has spoken we will do". The Torah relates that Moshe brought sacrifices on behalf of the people and he sprinkled them with the blood of the sacrifices after telling the people Sefer Habris and the people answered Naaseh Vnishma.

[The Rav noted that on Rosh Hashonah, the blessing of Malchios concludes with M'loch Al Kol Haolam Kulo Bchvodecha. The word Kulo seems superfluous. The Taz says that it adds emphasis to underscore that we do not mean Rubo K'kulo (majority == totality), rather we insist that ALL of creation recognize HaShem, we do not "round up". Similarly, ALL the people answered in unison that they will do all that HaShem commands them.]

The Gemara (Krisus 9a), (echoed by the Rambam) that the laws of conversion were learned from this chapter at the end of Mishpatim. Moshe converted the Jewish People at Sinai, similar to a gentile converting nowadays. Why did they require conversion, after all Avraham Avinu was a convert? Wherever they became obligated with new Mitzvos, they had to renew the Kedushas Yisrael and required a new conversion. At Mount Sinai, where they received all of Torah, they had to undergo conversion. The Ramban says that there was also a conversion in Egypt, where they received the obligation of Pesach. The mothers also underwent conversion, Tevila, prior to the Korban Pesach while the men underwent circumcision and immersion. Since all of Torah was given at Sinai, that marked the final conversion for the Jewish People.

We read the story of Ruth on Shavuos, because it is one of the 2 places in Tanach where the story of conversion is mentioned. Mishpatim mentions Hartzaas Damim, the requirement to bring a sacrifice and to undergo the circumcision and immersion aspects of conversion. Ruth mentions Kabbalas Mitzvos and Onshim. Ruth is the Megila of conversion, and Mattan Torah was the mass conversion of the Jewish nation, hence it is appropriate to read these on Shavuos.

Did the conversion take effect before or after Mattan Torah? There is no mention of the official process of conversion undergone by Bnay Yisrael in Parshas Yisro. Rashi (24:1) says that the events of the end of Mishpatim were given on the fourth of Sivan before Mattan Torah. When the Jews approached Sinai on the sixth they already were converted. According to the Ramban (24:1) the events at the end of Parshas Mishpatim took place on the seventh of Sivan. Immediately after the Asseres Hadibros, HaShem gave Moshe the laws of Parshas Mishpatim and then the Jews went through the conversion process.

One question on the Ramban: Mattan Torah was given to a group that were not yet Jews, since they had not yet gone through the conversion process. Also, an uncircumcised person may not enter the Mikdash, so how could these people have stood around Sinai, which had a law of Mikdash, prior to their conversion?

According to the Rav, Rashi and the Ramban agree when they were Niskadesh Bkdushas Yisrael. Kdushas Yisrael took effect through Giluy Shechina. When HaShem revealed Himself at Maamad Har Sinai and said Anochi, Bnay Yisrael were sanctified with Kdushas Yisrael. As seen from the blessing of Shofros on Rosh Hashonah, there were 2 purposes to Mattan Torah: 1) Giluy Shechina which was Mkadesh the people and 2) to teach them Torah. After all, if not for these 2 purposes to Maamad Har Sinai, why have the people encircle the mountain? HaShem could have simply given the Torah to Moshe and he would have relayed it to Bnay Yisrael. They had to be there in order to partake of the Giluy Shechina and the Kedushas Yisrael that it imparted to them. This is why Moshe said that on the third day HaShem will descend upon the mountain before the eyes of the entire nation, to allow the Giluy Shechina to impart the Kedushas Yisrael. In Devarim (4:9), Moshe tells the people to be careful not to forget what they saw with their eyes at Sinai, or to remove from their hearts what they learned at Sinai. Moshe is reminding them of the dual aspects of Maamad Har Sinai: the Giluy Shechina that imparted Kedushas Yisrael and the Torah that HaShem taught them.

The blessing of Ahava Rabbah recited daily stresses that HaShem taught us Torah at Har Sinai. Ahava Rabbah does not stress the Giluy Shechina. On Rosh Hashona we stress the Giluy Shechina in the blessing of Shofros, to underscore the divine revelation that happened at Sinai and that it will happen again in the days of the Messiah. We emphasize that Shofros is the Bracha of Giluy Shechina that was Mkadesh the people at Sinai when HaShem said the Asseres Hadibros. Therefore according to both Rashi and the Ramban the people were converts at the time of the Asseres Hadibros through the Giluy Shechina.

According to Rashi the process of conversion began on the fourth of Sivan, when they underwent the Milah (circumcision), Tevila (immersion) and Hartzzaas Damim (sprinkling the blood of the sacrifice) noted at the end of Parshas Mishpatim. On the sixth of Sivan, when HaShem announced the first commandment, they underwent Kabbalas Hamitzvos for ALL Mitzvos HaShem. This was Mkadesh the people. As Rashi and Rabeinu Saadiah Gaon say, the Asseres Hadibros are the principles from which all 613 Mitzvos are derived. At that time the Kabbalas Kol Hamitzvos applied to all Yisrael. According to Rashi, the conversion started on the fourth of Sivan, but the Chalos Hageirus, the fulfillment of the conversion, occurred with the Giluy Shechina at Mattan Torah on the sixth, when they received additional Mitzvos.

However according to the Ramban, if the Jews were sanctified as converts with the Giluy Shechina on the sixth of Sivan, why did Moshe have to put the people through the conversion process of the seventh of Sivan that is described at the end of Parshas Mishpatim?

The Rav answered that circumcision and immersion and offering the Korban are not only Meakev in the Geirus, rather there is a mitzva on the Ger to do all these things. There is a Machlokes in Yevamos if a Ger that does one (Tevila or Mila) but not the other qualifies as a Ger. The Ger that has circumcision is not complete until he undergoes immersion. The fulfillment of all the ceremonies of Geirus is both a Meakev (without which the process is incomplete) and a Kiyum (a fulfillment of the Mitzva of Geirus) that the Ger is now obligated to perform. Mattan Torah imbued the people with Kedushas Yisrael. But there was still an obligation to fulfill all the aspects of Geirus and to perform the rest of the process of Milah and Tevila and Korban. This happened on the seventh of Sivan. According to Rashi and the Ramban, Kedushas Yisrael occurred at Maamad Has Sinai, it is impossible to believe that they were Jews before Sinai. According to Rashi, Maamad Har Sinai completed the Geirus process that began on the fourth of Sivan with Milah, Tevila and Hartzzaas Damim (Korban). According to the Ramban, Moshe completed the Kiyum Geirus on the seventh.

A convert must achieve two attributes of conversion. 1) To be sanctified with Kedushas Yisrael. 2) A ger must enter the covenant of HaShem,

Krisas Bris. In Parshas Bchukosai we mention the Bris HaShem at Har Sinai, which took place on the seventh of Sivan (according to the Ramban). The Ger must fulfill the obligations that the Jews took at Sinai. He must experience the Kdushas Yisrael attained at Sinai on the sixth of Sivan. He must also enter Krisas Bris through Tevila, Milah and Hartzzaas Damim, just like the Jews did on the seventh of Sivan (according to the Ramban). The Braysa says that the Jews entered the Bris HaShem through Milah, Tevila and Korban. We add that the same applies for all future genres so that nowadays we require that the Ger first undergo the Milah and Tevila (which both facilitate Geirus and fulfill the Mitzvas Hager) and then accept upon himself the obligations of Mitzvos (Kabbalas Ol Mitzvos) to enter the Bris HaShem. According to the Ramban, at Har Sinai the order was reversed. First they underwent Kabbalas Ol Mitzvos by obligating themselves to do (Naaseh) all that HaShem has commanded them through the 10 commandments and the laws of Parshas Mishpatim, and then they performed the acts of Geirus.

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Ezras Torah Luach

Sivan 5764

EREV SHAVUOS TUESDAY, MAY 25, 5 SIVAN 49th DAY OF THE OMER The customary weekday service. No Tachanun; we say Lamnazeach. One washes (some immerse themselves in a Mikveh) and makes all necessary preparations in honor of Yom Tov. The Yom Tov lights are kindled at the proper time, with the Brachos Lehadlik Ner Shel Yom Tov and Shehecheyanu.

FIRST DAY SHAVUOS

TUESDAY NIGHT, MAY 25, 6 SIVAN We delay the recitation of Maariv until 72 minutes after sunset (under extenuating circumstances, 60 minutes will suffice) because the count of seven weeks must be totally complete before we acknowledge the Holiday of Shavuos with our prayers.

MAARIV For a Yom Tov night; Borchu...; Ufros...; Vayedaber...; Half-Kaddish; Shemonah Esrei of Yom Tov; Es Yom Chag Hashavuos Hazeh Zeman Matan Torasainu; Kaddish Tiskabel; Yom Tov Kiddush; Borei Pri Hagafen, Asher Buchar, iMekadesh Yisroel Vehazmanimi Shehecheyanu; Aleinu; Mourner's Kaddish; Adon Olam.

Kiddush at home as above.

(Many are accustomed to spend the entire night of Shavuos studying Torah, saying the Tikun Shavuos, and reading listings of the 613 Commandments. Afterwards, they recite the Shachris prayers in the fashion of the; Vetikin;- the ancient pietists whose lives revolved around the performance of Mitzvos in the most exemplary fashion possible [see pages 27-28 for a fuller understanding as to the schedule with which this type of service is to progress].

WEDNESDAY MORNING, MAY 26

SHACHRIS In usual Yom Tov fashion: Psukei Dazimra; Nishmas; Birchah Yotzer; Hameir Laaretz; Ahava Rabbah; Shema; Shemonah Esrei of Yom Tov; the Chazzan's Repetition; complete Hallel; Kaddish Tiskabel; Ain Kamocha; open Aron; 13 Middos (with Ribono Shel Olam of Yom Tov); we take out two Sifrei Torah. We say Akdamos; 6 the long Aramaic poem praising G-D, before the Kohan makes his Bracha on the Torah. In the first Sefer Torah we have five Aliyahs in Parshas Yisro (Exodus 19:1-20:23); Half-Kaddish; Maftir reads in the second Sefer Torah from Parshas Pinchas (Numbers 28:26-31); Uvyom Habikurim. The Haftorah is read from Ezekiel 1:1-28 and 3:12 (a child should not be called up to read this Haftorah); usual Brachos for Yom Tov after the reading of the Haftorah; Kah Keili; Ashrei; Yehalelu; Half-Kaddish.

MUSSAF For Yom Tov: Shemonah Esrei of Yom Tov Mussaf (the Additional Offering mentioned is Uvyom Habikurim); the Chazzan's Repetition; Priestly Blessing with Ribono Shel Olam and Yehi Ratzon; Kaddish Tiskabel; Ein Keilakainu; Aleinu; Anim Zmiros; Shir Shel Yom (Psalm of the Day); Mourner's Kaddish; Adon Olam.

(The custom is to partake of some dairy food on Shavuos besides the usual festive meat meals.)

MINCHA Ashrei; Uva Letzion; Half-Kaddish; Shemonah Esrei of Yom Tov; the Chazzan's Repetition; Kaddish Tiskabel; Aleinu; Mourner's Kaddish.

We wait 72 minutes (under extenuating circumstances, 60 minutes will suffice) before lighting candles and making any of the preparations for the Second Day of Yom Tov.

SECOND DAY SHAVUOS

WEDNESDAY NIGHT, MAY 26, 7 SIVAN MAARIV For a Yom Tov night; Borchu...; Ufros...; Vayedaber...; Half-Kaddish; Shemonah Esrei of Yom Tov with - Es Yom Chag Hashavuos Hazeh Zeman Matan Tora; Kaddish Tiskabel after Shemonah Esrei; Yom Tov Kiddush with Shehecheyanu; Aleinu; Mourner's Kaddish; Adon Olam.

Kiddush at home as above.

THURSDAY MORNING, MAY 27

SHACHRIS As is customary for Yom Tov: Psukei Dazimra; Nishmas; Birkas Yotzer; Hamayir Lafaretz; Ahava Rabba; Shema; Shemonah Esrei of Yom Tov; the Chazzan's Repetition; complete Hallel; Kaddish Tiskabel. We read Megillas Rus (the Book of Ruth) followed by Mourner's Kaddish; Ein Kamocha; open Aron; 13 Middos (with Ribono Shel Olam of Yom Tov); we take out two Sifrei Torah; Brich Shmei; in the first Sefer Torah we have five Aliyahs in Parshas R'ei (Deut. 15:19-16:17); Half-Kaddish; Maftir reads in the second Sefer Torah from Parshas Pinchas (Numbers 28:26-31) Uvyom Habikurim. The Haftorah is read from Habakkuk 2:20-3:19 (after the second verse of the Haftorah *ó* Lechabakuk Hanavi Al Shigyonos, the Maftir recites the Piyut Yetziv Pisgam; usual Brachos for Yom Tov after the reading of the Haftorah.

YIZKOR We make pledges to Tzedakah as a means of elevating the souls of the departed (particularly beneficial as a source of merit for both the living and the dead are donations to Ezras Torah, which aids thousands of needy families of Bnei Torah in Israel and throughout the world). Av Harachamim; no Kah Keili (Shar Efraim) Ashrei; Yehalelu; we return the Sifrei Torah to the Aron HaKodesh; Half-Kaddish.

MUSSAF As is customary for Yom Tov; Shemonah Esrei of Yom Tov Mussaf (the Additional Offering mentioned in Uvyom Habikurim); the Chazzan's Repetition; Priestly Blessing; Kaddish Tiskabel; Ein Keilakainu; Aleinu; Anim Zmiros; Shir Shel Yom (Psalm of the Day); Mourner's Kaddish; Adon Olam.

MINCHA As is customary for Yom Tov: Ashrei; Uva Letzion; Half-Kaddish; Shemonah Esrei of Yom Tov; the Chazzan's Repetition; Kaddish Tiskabel; Aleinu; Mourner's Kaddish.

ISRU CHAG

THURSDAY NIGHT, MAY 27, 8 SIVAN MAARIV For the departure of Yom Tov: Ata Chonantanu in weekday Shemonah Esrei; Kaddish Tiskabel; Havdalah (Borai Pri Hagafen and Hamavdil); Aleinu; Mourner's Kaddish.

Havdalah at home as above.

FRIDAY MORNING, MAY 28

SHACHRIS For a weekday morning: Shemonah Esrei; Chazzan's Repetition; Half-Kaddish (we omit Tachanun); Ashrei; Lomnazeach; Uva Letzion; Kaddish Tiskabel; Aleinu; Psalm of the Day; Mourner's Kaddish.

SHABBOS PARSHAS NASO

MAY 29, 9 SIVAN The Haftorah is read from Judges 13:2-25. Chapter 1 of Pirkei Avos.

(Those who do not say Tachanun through 12 Sivan omit Tzidkascha Tzedek today.) The final time for the sanctification of the New Moon of Sivan is the night following Wednesday until 4:41 AM June 2 (14 Sivan).

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From: RABBI SHLOMO RISKIN'S SHABBAT SHALOM Parsha Column [parshat\_hashavua@ohrtorahstone.org.il] Sent: May 19, 2004 To: Rabbi Shlomo Riskin's Shabbat Shalom Parsha Column Subject: Shabbat Shalom: Parshat Bamidbar - Shavuot by Rabbi Shlomo Riskin Shabbat Shalom: Parshat Bamidbar - Shavuot (Numbers 1:1 - 4:20) By Shlomo Riskin

Efrat, Israel - The Scroll of Ruth contains one of the most idyllic stories in the Bible, a tale of "autumnal love" between a widow (Ruth) and a widower (Boaz), within the backdrop of diaspora inter-marriage, conversion to Judaism, and the agricultural life in ancient Israel. The Rabbinic Sages ordained that we read this Scroll on Shavuot, the Festival of Weeks, the anniversary of the Torah Revelation at Sinai and the celebration of the first fruits brought to the Temple in Jerusalem. And since Shavuot is the climatic zenith of Passover, the development of a newly-freed group of slaves in the Sinai desert into a Torah-imbued nation firmly ensconced in their own homeland of Israel, the reasons for this special reading are many: Boaz and Ruth are the great - grandparents of David, the Psalm-singing military hero who united the tribes of Israel and first envisioned the Holy Temple in Jerusalem, Ruth the Moabite is Jew-by-choice whose commitment to Torah Judaism makes her worthy of being the great grand-mother of the prototype of the eventual Messiah-King, and the last three chapters of the story takes place between the beginning of the barley harvest (just before Passover) and the very end of the wheat harvest (not long after Shavuot). I would wish to ask three questions on the Scroll of Ruth, the answer to which I believe will provide an extra dimension of our understanding as to why we read this particular Scroll on Shavuot, the festival which serves as harbinger to redemption.

Firstly, from a narrative perspective: the first chapter spans the ten years the family of Naomi is in Moab, and the last three chapters describe the happenings of the three month period between the barley and wheat harvests. Why did the author give so much text space to such a small span of times?

Secondly, the midrash (Ruth Rabbah) tells us that Ruth and Naomi arrive in Bethlehem at the precise time of the funeral of Boaz's wife, and that Boaz died immediately after he impregnated Ruth; that is how the Rabbinic Sages account for the fact that Boaz is not mentioned in the last verses of the Scroll (Ruth 4:14-22), which specifically deal with the birth of Oved, son to Boaz and Ruth as well as father to Jesse. Why do the Sages see fit to sandwich these joyous verses recounting such a significant love story between two seemingly tragic deaths - without the text itself mentioning those deaths explicitly or even hinting at a mournful mood? And finally, can we possibly glean from between the lines of the Scroll what precisely occurred between Boaz and Ruth during the night they spent together on the threshing floor. What did her mother-in-law Naomi suggest that she do - and what did she do in actuality?

If Shavuot is truly the Festival of Redemption - and redemption links humanity to the Eternal G-d of all eternity - the period which is eternally Sabbath - then the Scroll of Ruth must deal with the eternal rather than the temporal. Israel is the eternal homeland of the Jewish people - and any diaspora experience can only be temporal at best and destructive at worst. The first chapter opens with a famine in Israel, and an important personage (Elimelekh) who leaves Bethlehem (literally the house of bread) with his wife and sons to seek "greener pastures" in the idolatrous Moab. As happened with Father Abraham, Diaspora proved far more dangerous (Genesis 12:10-20), the two sons, Mahlon (lit. sickness) and Kilion (lit. destruction) marry Hittite wives - and since the children follow the religion of the mother, the Israelite line of Elimelekh and Naomi - seems to have ended! The father and his sons all die in Moab - their earlier spiritual demise expressing itself physically; fortunately one daughter-in-law clings to her mother-in-law Naomi, converts to Judaism ("Where you will go" - to Israel - "there shall I go, where you will lodge, there shall I lodge," - maintaining the same sexual purity as you - "Your people shall be my people, your G-d my G-d" - Ruth 1:16), and returns to Bethlehem. Only now - in Israel - can eternal history begin, and so the next three chapters, and the next three months, are far more significant than the previous ten years, which had almost destroyed the family line.

The midrash tells us that Boaz's wife has died just as Naomi and Ruth return - and that Boaz will die three months later. But death in itself is not tragic for Judaism: after all, every individual must die sooner or later. The only relevant question is to what extent the individual, when alive, participates in Jewish eternity. Naomi sends Ruth to glean the forgotten grain and harvest the produce in the corner of the field - agricultural provision which the Torah provides for the poor Israelites. Divine Providence sent Ruth to Boaz's field - and Boaz was a Kinsman of Elimelekh. Boaz seems to be attracted to this comely proselyte -stranger and gives her his protection. Naomi understands that participation in Jewish eternity means having a child with Jewish parentage in Israel; she therefore instructs Ruth to wash and anoint herself, dress in special finery, visit the place on the threshing floor where Boaz will be spending the night at the height of the harvest season, and lie down at his feet. She also warns Ruth not to reveal who she is (Ruth 3:3,4). In effect, she is suggesting that Ruth tempt Boaz as Tamar had tempted Boaz's forbear Judah generations earlier - and at least enter Jewish history by bearing his child (see Genesis, chapter 38).

Ruth senses that Boaz loves her - and so she holds out for higher stakes than a mere "one night stand." She tells him exactly who she is, and she asks that he "redeem" her by marriage and by restoring to her Elimelekh's previously sold homestead in Israel. Ruth understands that true eternity means bearing a child on your own piece of land in Israel - not in the sly, but as a respected wife and householder. Boaz complies, and Oved, the grandfather of King David, is born. Ruth's commitment to Torah - the land of Torah, the laws of Torah, the loving-kindness of Torah, the modesty of Torah - catapults this convert into the center stage

of Jewish eternity. Indeed, there is no book more fitting for the Festival of The First Fruits, Torah and Redemption than the Scroll of Ruth. Shabbat Shalom.

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<http://www.torah.org/learning/yomtov/shavuot/vol1no26.html>  
SHAVU'OS - ITS CUSTOMS

BY: RABBI YEHUDAH PRERO,

There are many customs associated with Shavu'os and we will try to touch on most of the major ones.

One prevalent custom is that of staying up all night on the first night of Shavu'os and learning Torah. The Rama (in Orech Chayim 494) explains that we do this because at the time the Torah was given, our forefathers slept throughout the night. Hashem had to awaken the nation of Israel from their slumber so the Torah could be given to them. In order to "repair" this fault in our ancestors' reception of the Torah, we stay up all night, the anniversary of the night our forefathers slept, learning the Torah which they had to be awakened to receive.

One of the things traditionally studied on Shavu'os night is a compilation of parts of both the Written and the Oral Torah, entitled Tikkun Leil Shavu'os. This compilation was organized centuries ago. One noticeable feature of the compilation is that in it, each book in the Written Torah (Tanach) is begun and concluded, as well as each of the six books of the Mishna. The reason for this stems from a teaching which we see applied in the Kedusha said as part of Mussaf on Shabbos. In the Kedusha, we recite "S'hma Yisroel" and we conclude that portion of Kedusha with "Ani Hashem Elokeichem." Not coincidentally, these two verses are also the first and last verses of the S'hma prayer. The reason why it appears in Kedusha is because during our exile in Persia, the king forbade the saying of S'hma. In order to circumvent the decree, the first and last verses of S'hma were added to Kedusha, so it would be considered as if we had said the whole S'hma prayer, although not violating the king's decree. Similarly by Shavu'os, we learn the beginning and end of each part of the Torah, so by the end of the night, it is as if we had learned the Torah in its entirety. (from Sefer Minhagei Yisroel Torah)

Another custom that we have is to eat dairy foods on Shavu'os. There are many reasons give for this. The reason that the Rama (in 494:3) mentions has to do with the special offering brought on Shavu'os, the Shte HaLechem (see YomTov # 23). The Rama says that just as on Pesach, we have food items that represent the offerings brought on that day (on the Seder plate - The Z'roa/Shankbone to represent the Paschal offering, and the Beitza/Egg to represent the Chagiga/Holiday offering), so, too on Shavu'os we should eat something to remember the bringing of the Shte HaLechem. How is this done? The law (which is being oversimplified here for brevity's sake) is that one can not use the same loaf of bread for both a meat meal and a dairy meal. If a loaf is eaten with the dairy meal, it can not be used at a meat meal. Therefore, on Shavu'os, before we begin our meat meal, we should have dairy foods. This way, when we continue our meal and have meat, we will need another loaf of bread to eat with it. This will result in our having two loaves of bread on our table, which is a remembrance of the two loaves that were offered in the Temple on Shavu'os. The Mishna B'rura adds to this that one should make the first loaf dairy by adding butter to it, so that it will be absolutely necessary to have a second loaf when eating the meat portion of the meal.

(\*\*\*A caveat - before one undertakes having milk and meat at the same meal, one should make sure that they act in accordance with proper Halacha - only meat can be eaten after dairy. Dairy cannot be immediately eaten after meat.

Also, all vestiges of the dairy meal should be removed from the table before the meat is served. As there are many other applicable laws with varying levels of complexity, many people no longer eat both milk and meat and the same meal. Some eat only dairy at the meal, or they eat two

separate meals, one after another, the first being dairy, the second being meat. For any questions as to how one should conduct themselves, they should speak to their local Rabbi. \*\*\*)

Another reason for eating dairy is so that we remember the situation our ancestors were in immediately after receiving the Torah, on the anniversary of our receiving the Torah. The Mishna B'rura tells us that right after the nation of Israel received the Torah, the came away from Har Sinai, and were faced with a quandary: What should they eat? They had just learned that there were laws of keeping Kosher which they had not followed before, such as the law that an animal is to be slaughtered and checked for blemishes in a certain way. As they did not know the laws well, dairy foods were the only option. Also, as all the food they had cooked previously was not "Kosher," the pots and other cooking utensils could not be used right away, as they had to be "Kashed." Therefore, as their only choice of food at the time was dairy, we eat dairy as well to remember the situation of our ancestors at the time they received the Torah.

Another custom that we have is to spread out greenery in our homes and synagogue on Shavu'os. The Levush says the reason for this is also so that we remember how things were at the time the Torah was given. We know that Har Sinai was full of greenery, as Hashem had to give a warning to the nation of Israel that "also your sheep and cattle should not graze by this mountain (Sh'mos 34:3). In order to remember that time, we too have greenery, so we remember how things were at the time we received the Torah.

It is mentioned by the Magen Avraham that there used to be a custom as well to bring trees into the synagogue on Shavu'os, as Shavu'os is the day the fruit trees are judged as to how they will produce for the rest of the year. If trees are there before us as we pray, we will be reminded to pray for the fruit trees as well. However, the custom was abandoned when other religions brought trees into their houses of worship on their holidays.

The Megilla of Rus (Ruth) is read in Shavu'os. Sefer Ta'amei Haminhagim writes that we read this Megilla on Shavu'os because of the connection between Ruth and King David. The Megilla of Ruth was written by the prophet Sh'muel so that we would know the story of David's ancestors, and that David came from this righteous woman. In the Tosafos on the tractate of Chagiga (17a), we are told that David died on Shavu'os. As we have a tradition that Hashem makes "complete" the lives of the righteous, it must be that David was born on Shavu'os as well. It is therefore appropriate to read the story of David's ancestors as an honor to him, on the day of his birth.

The Magen Avraham (490:8) tells us that there is another connection between Ruth and Shavu'os. Just as the process leading to our receiving the Torah was filled with pain and trying times, so too the path that Ruth took to receiving the Torah was filled with the same.

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<http://www.shemaisrael.com/shavous/cheese.htm>  
CHEESE BLINTZES AND BEEF WELLINGTON  
RABBI MOSHE DONNEBAUM

Moadim Uzmanim A Journal of Torah Thought and Halacha for the Yomim Tovim - Publication of Kollel Beis HaTalmud Yehuda Fishman Institute The Kollel Beth HaTalmud is a branch of Lakewood's Beth medrash Gavoha in Melbourne Australia.

A universally accepted minhag associated with the Yom Tov of Shavu'os is to eat dairy food. As we count the last days of the Omer leading up to the forthcoming Chag, the aroma of various milchig delicacies fills the air. The details of this custom vary from community to community and family to family. Some begin the Yom Tov meal with dairy, following onto meat, whilst others eat dairy for the entire seuda. Some communities have dairy at the evening meal, whilst others by the Yom Tov day "brunch". Still others fulfil their duty merely with a dairy snack, for example, a piece of cheesecake, and some have two complete meals,

dairy followed by meat. There are many reasons cited for this minhag<sup>1</sup> and it is beyond the scope of this essay to enumerate them all. However we will review a few and also present a timely examination of the requirements for separating between meat and dairy meals as they pertain to the Shavuos seudos.

#### The Two Breads

In addition to the Korban Mussaf sacrifice brought onto the Mizbeach on Shavuos, was the Shte Halechem, the two breads. These were brought from the new wheat crop and were baked to the dimensions of seven hand-breadths long, four and a half hand breadths wide and four 'fingers' high. After performing the required tenufos "wavings", one of the breads was eaten by the Kohen Gadol and the other was divided and eaten by the twenty-four Mishmaros.

Since the destruction of the Second Temple, we are unfortunately not able to offer any sacrifices. However, as with other Yomim Tovim, certain minhagim have developed as a reminder of the sacrifices that were brought in days of old. The Rema<sup>2</sup> and the Mateh Moshe<sup>3</sup> connect the custom of eating dairy on Shavuos to the Shte Halechem. Since bread used with a dairy meal may not be eaten with a meat meal, eating meals of both dairy and meat on Shavuos necessitates two breads. Accordingly, one could either begin the meal with dairy and then switch to meat, bringing to the table a second loaf of bread as required (plus changing the tablecloth and settings), or commemorate the Shte Halechem with two separate meals, the first dairy and the second meat.

#### The Angels ate dairy and meat

When Moshe Rabbeinu appeared in Shamayim to receive the Torah on behalf of the Bnei Yisroel, the Midrash tells us that the angels said before Hashem "Such a precious treasure which you have stored beneath your Holy Throne for nine hundred and twenty four generations, why do you intend giving it to mere mortals of flesh and blood?" Hashem replied to them: "You are not worthy of receiving the Torah because you ate Basar Bechalav in Avraham Avinu's tent when you were served cream, milk and meat. Yet even a child of the Bnei Yisroel who arrives home from school and is served dairy followed by meat makes sure to wash his hands in between."<sup>4</sup>

The Be'er Heiteiv in his commentary to the Shulchan Aruch<sup>5</sup> cites this Midrash as another reason for eating dairy on Shavuos. We see that Bnei Yisroel were worthy of receiving the Torah because of their scrupulous attention to the mitzvah of Basar Bechalav. Therefore on Shavuos, the Yom Tov of receiving the Torah, we customarily show the distinction between dairy and meat. According to this line of reasoning, it would not be necessary to have a special dairy bread meal or to begin a bread meal with dairy. Rather, an act which demonstrates the separation between dairy and meat would suffice. One might eat a dairy snack, rinse and clean one's mouth, wash one's hands (as detailed in the following section) and according to some Poskim (also detailed below) recite a beracha achrona or Birchas Hamazon and then commence a meat meal.

#### Requirements between dairy and meat

Having now considered two reasons for eating dairy and then meat at our Shavuos seudos, it is fitting at this point to review and examine the halachos that govern our conduct when eating these two types of foods consecutively.

Many have the custom of waiting half an hour after eating dairy foods (other than hard cheese which has the same stringency as meat) before eating meat. This minhag is based on a Zohar, which prohibits consuming milk and meat within the same hour and assumes that the hour mentioned is an approximation<sup>6</sup>. Although the commentators on the Shulchan Aruch note this minhag and consider it praiseworthy, there is no direct reference to this custom in either the Talmud or the Shulchan Aruch. On the contrary, the Shulchan Aruch<sup>7</sup> states that one may eat meat straight after dairy provided that one is careful to perform the following actions:

a) Rinsing one's mouth - one may not eat meat after dairy without rinsing one's mouth in between to wash away any dairy residue.

b) Cleansing one's mouth - one may not eat meat after dairy without first cleansing one's mouth by eating a bulky food, e.g. a fruit or a cracker, with the exception of flour, dates and green vegetables.

c) Washing one's hands - one who eats cheese or other dairy food must check or preferably wash his hands before eating meat, to cleanse them of any cheese or food adhering to them.

(Concerning one who ate using cutlery or drank a cup of milk, ie. his hands did not come into contact with the food, the Badei Hashulchan<sup>8</sup> cites a dispute among the Poskim and concludes that one should preferably abide by the more stringent view and wash their hands).

The question arises as to whether these procedures are necessary when one adheres to the custom of waiting half an hour after dairy before eating meat. Let us first examine the halacha in the converse case of eating milk after meat. The Poskim agree that when one has the minhag to wait six hours between meat and milk (as is the custom of the majority of Ashkenazic Jewry nowadays), he is not required to rinse and cleanse his mouth nor wash his hands in between. However, we find a dispute concerning those communities, mainly of Dutch origin, who continue to follow the lenient opinion mentioned in the Shulchan Aruch<sup>9</sup> of reciting a beracha achrona after eating meat and then waiting one hour before eating milk<sup>10</sup>. Contemporary Halachic authorities seem to follow the more stringent view and require the rinsing, cleansing and washing<sup>11</sup>. However, in the case of those who wait half an hour after dairy before eating meat, the Poskim<sup>12</sup> are more lenient (if one ate milk or soft cheese, eg., cottage cheese) in this respect unless one knows of any milk residue in his mouth or on his hands.

There is another issue that arises particularly on Shavuos when one eats dairy and meat meals consecutively. Again, examining the converse case first, when one wants to eat a dairy meal after a meat meal, besides waiting the necessary time, one is required to make a beracha achrona that separates the two acts of eating into distinct meals. But when the milk meal comes before the meat, even though there is no requirement to wait in between (although as we have mentioned, some wait half an hour) the Poskim dispute the necessity of separating the meals with a beracha achrona. In light of this dispute we find the two customs mentioned at the outset: - Presumably those who eat two complete meals on Shavuos and bentsh in between, hold that a beracha achrona is indeed required to separate the milk meal from the ensuing meat meal. But those who begin with dairy and then continue the meal with meat without an intervening beracha achrona evidently hold otherwise<sup>13</sup>.

Bnei Yisroel were unable to eat meat

Of course, the need to separate between milk and meat on Shavuos is completely circumvented by those who celebrate with a dairy-only meal. What then is their motivation?

Rav Sadya Gaon<sup>14</sup> writes that the Ten Commandments given to Moshe Rabbeinu on Har Sinai, contained within them all 613 commandments. In effect, the Bnei Yisroel of that generation, upon receiving the Ten Commandments, were obligated in all of the mitzvos, both positive and negative. Among the 365 prohibitions, are the many mitzvos to do with kashrus. For example, one is forbidden to eat part of an animal that was not slaughtered or to partake of the flesh of an animal whose blood was not drained from it. Cooking kosher food in utensils that have previously been infused with non-kosher flavour, is also forbidden. After Matan Torah, Bnei Yisroel could not have eaten the meat they possessed because it was not suitably prepared to their new standards. To prepare kosher meat requires checking the knife, slaughtering, removing the fats, soaking, salting and acquiring new utensils for the cooking process. All this would have taken much time. Thus it is understood that they ate dairy. So too, many have the minhag to commemorate Matan Torah by eating a completely dairy meal as our ancestors did<sup>15</sup>.

The commentators voice a further concern in relation to the dairy-only custom. We know that a custom cannot and may not override a halacha. One of the halachos related to the mitzva of Simchas Yom Tov is the requirement to eat meat during the Yom Tov Seuda<sup>16</sup>. However, the Shaagos Aryeh<sup>17</sup> concludes that there is no mitzva of Simchas Yom Tov on the first night of Yom Tov. Thus even though the Bnei Yisroel were still allowed to partake of their "former" food at night, and a dairy-only meal by day would seem a more accurate commemoration of their conduct, the ruling of the Shaagos Aryeh may be the factor motivating those who eat a dairy-only meal on the first night.

Milk and Torah

In conclusion, we mention a final reason pertaining to the custom of eating dairy on Shavuos. Just as a human being cannot physically survive without food, likewise the soul of every person needs to be continually nourished - not with material supplies, but with Torah. Torah is the "mazon ruchni" spiritual food, for the neshama. Torah is also the essential ingredient to conquer the evil inclination as the Gemara<sup>18</sup> states:

"I created the Yetzer Hora and I created the antidote to be able to tackle and overpower one's Yetzer Hora."<sup>19</sup>

When a child is born, its sole source of nourishment is milk. We also find that Torah is compared to milk as the possuk states in Shir HaShirim<sup>20</sup> "Honey and Milk beneath your tongue"<sup>21</sup>. Says the Elya Rabba, on Shavuos we eat milchig to remind us that in the same way that a child cannot survive and grow without milk, so too every person must realise that he cannot exist without Torah.

We say each evening in the beracha preceding Krias Shema: אֲנֵינוּ יְהוָה אֱלֹהֵינוּ "אֲנֵינוּ יְהוָה אֱלֹהֵינוּ" - "For they are our life and our length of days" - "our life" in this world in our day to day growth, refinement of character and battle with the Yetzer Hora - "and our length of days" in the world to come where our nourished neshama reaps the reward. This is the message one should contemplate while dining on those cheese blintzes.

B'tei'avon!

1. See Mekadesh Yisroel No. 70, Ner L'Meah on Chag HaShavuos. 2. Orach Chaim 494:3. 3. No. 692. 4. Midrash Shochar Tov 8, Pesikta Rabbasi, end chapter 26, see Shita Mekubetzes to Bechoros 6b, Bircas Peretz, Parshas Vayeira, Beis HaLevi Parshas Yisro. 5. Shulchan Aruch 494:8. 6. For an elaboration of this custom see Pri Hadar on Sifsei Daas 89:29.v 7. 89:2. 8. 89:43. 9. Rema, Yoreh Deah 89:2. 10. See Y.D. 89:2, Taz 89:2; Mishbetzos Zahav, 89:2, as opposed to Shach 89:2, and Chochmas Adam 40:13. 11. Concerning Jews of German origin who follow their tradition of waiting 3 hours between meat and milk, they have the same status as those who wait 6 hours. See Rav M. Stern quoted in Pischei Halacha, page 112, Question 4. 12. See Rabbi M. Stern quoted in Pischei Halacha page 113, Question 8, Teshuvos Birchas Shamayim (Kasho). 13. Furthermore, after eating meat, besides reciting the beracha achrona, one must also have decided to conclude the meal. Merely saying a beracha achrona with the intention to shortly begin a dairy meal is not sufficient - (see Taz 89:3). However, those who follow the custom of eating two distinct meals on Shavuos may recite a beracha achrona or Bircas Hamazon despite their intention to shortly begin a meat meal. See Pri Migadim, Y.D., M.Z. 89:3, Badei Hashulchan, tzionim 160. 14. Cited in Rashi, Shemos 24:12, Ibn Ezra, Shemos 20:1. As well as his Sefer Hamitzvos, Rav Sadya Gaon also compiled a Sefer Azharos where he explains how all 613 mitzvos are included in the Ten Commandments. 15. Mishna Berura 494:12 citing what he once heard from a Gadol. A related reason for the dairy only minhag is brought down in Imrei Pinchos, Shabbos U'Moadim No 315-321 which states that it was not possible to prepare kosher meat because it was Shabbos and slaughtering is forbidden. 16. See Beis Yosef, O.C. 529, M.A. 529:3 and Darchei Teshuva, Y.D. 89:19. 17. No. 68. 18. Kiddushin 30b. 19. See Nefesh Hachaim, Part 4 chap. 22 - 26 where he elaborates on how Torah is the very source of all resistance and the sustaining force of the universe. One who studies Torah is not merely educating himself and nourishing his own soul, he is also activating a force that galvanises the entire cosmos. 20. 2:11. 21. See Midrash Rabba, Devarim Par. 7.

From: Yeshivat Har Etzion Office [office@etzion.org.il] Sent:, May 23, 2004 To: yhe-holiday@etzion.org.il Subject: Special Shavuos Package Part 1 Yeshivat Har

Etzion Israel Koschitzky Virtual Beit Midrash (Vbm) Yhe-Holiday: Special Shavuos Package

In memory of Joy Rochwarger Balsam z"l, a talented and dedicated educator on three continents, who devoted herself wholeheartedly to Am Yisrael, Torat Yisrael and Eretz Yisrael. Though her life was tragically cut short, she left behind a rich legacy of commitment and hundreds of students and friends whose lives were touched by her. Yehi zikhrah barukh. To her husband, parents and siblings: May you receive some consolation from knowing how many people were inspired by her, and how much of a difference she made in her too-brief life. Ha-Makom yenachem etchem be-tokh shear avlei Tzion vi- Yerushalayim.

"MAKE YOUR TORAH PERMANENT:

" THE CENTRALITY OF TORAH STUDY

BASED ON AN ADDRESS BY HARAV AHARON LICHTENSTEIN

Adapted By Rav Reuven Ziegler

The mishna in Avot (1:15) states: "Shammai says: Make your Torah keva." This saying can take on several meanings, depending on how we understand the term keva, and I think that each of these meanings teaches us something important about being a Jew and a ben-Torah.

MAKE TORAH A PERMANENT FEATURE

Rashi offers two explanations of Shammai's dictum:

1. You should not set aside times for Torah, but rather you should make it keva (permanent) the entire day.
2. Set yourself times to learn four or five chapters every day.

Rashi is not talking about a person who spends his entire day, or even most of it, learning. But in terms of this person's attitude, his desire, what he would do were he divested of other responsibilities - he makes Torah primary. He yearns for Torah; he has never given up on it; he has never set it aside. It is always, somehow, at least subliminally, part of his agenda.

This is the sense of Rashi's first interpretation - do not "set aside" time for Torah, like you set aside time for tennis. Rather, make it a permanent, important factor around which your day revolves. How much you will actually be able to learn depends upon circumstances: where you are, what other responsibilities you have, etc. But in terms of your attitude, your commitment to Torah is rock-solid; it is the framework through which you view your life.

FIX TIMES FOR TORAH

Though a person may thirst for Torah, this longing still needs to be translated into practical terms. If you remain with nothing more than this general thirst, it is entirely conceivable that nothing will come of it - it will remain hazy and fuzzy, but will not translate into actual talmud Torah.

This is where the second element in Rashi comes to the fore: "Set aside time to learn four or five chapters a day." While you should set no upper limit to your learning, surely you cannot make do without setting a lower limit, a daily minimum. In order to give firmness to your commitment to Torah, you must set minimal designated times for learning.

Thus, Rashi's two explanations do not contradict each other. The latter gives you a minimal real framework. The former gives you a direction, a thirst, a longing, without setting any kind of upper limit.

PRIORITY IN TERMS OF VALUES

The Rambam offers a similar understanding:

Make talmud Torah primary and all your other activities secondary; if you can engage in [the other activities], fine, and if not, not. (Commentary on the Mishna, ad loc.)

Torah is the root and basis of your existence, and all else is built around it. Here the Rambam surely is not talking about the quantitative element. Rather, he is talking about the axiological element, about one's values: What is central and what is peripheral? To the extent that it is possible for you to plan, which element is dominant and which is subservient?

It may be that the axiological centrality of Torah will not necessarily translate into its being quantitatively that to which you devote most of your time. When one plans his personal budget, or when a government plans a national budget, there is little disposable income left after one has factored in the various expenses of the necessities of life. Similarly, after one factors in the time he must devote to fulfilling his responsibilities and obligations, how much "free time" is left? But the test is precisely what a person does with whatever time is left to him. He doesn't have a choice about going to work; he has to make a living. But when he comes home, he can decide whether to read the paper and watch television or whether to sit down to learn. Here the question of what is primary and what is secondary comes to the fore.

It is also critical how a person defines his professional and economic goals. If a person says he must work twelve hours a day because he has decided that he absolutely must earn several hundred thousand dollars a year, and then he says,



"Whatever is left over will be for Torah" - that decision itself reflects his priorities. But if he sets a reasonable level of need and of necessity, and that is legitimately set aside, then the question of what he does with his remaining time comes into play.

There are halakhic implications to this question. The gemara (Bava Batra 7b) rules that talmidei chakhamim (Torah scholars) are exempt from paying municipal taxes. Rosh (1:26) says that a talmid chakham is defined as a person whose Torah is his occupation (torato umanuto). Today we think of this in terms of someone whose profession it is to learn Torah, someone who does nothing else. But Maharam of Rothenberg (cited in Responsa of the Rosh, 15:8) says that it doesn't mean this at all. Torato umanuto applies even if a person spends most of his day at work, but his natural bent is to learn Torah. When he has a free hour, he devotes it to Torah; when he has a vacation, he uses it to learn Torah. That is torato umanuto - his natural self realizing itself. When he is at work and cannot learn, he is, in a sense, suppressing his natural bent.

#### NOT TRANSITORY

Thus far, we have spoken of "Aseh toratekha keva" in two senses: 1) making Torah primary in terms of values, and regarding our relation to Torah - and to G-d via Torah - as all-pervasive in our lives; 2) making it a fixed element of our day, with the attendant commitment and discipline. But there is yet another sense of keva which is implied in a baraita:

"Aseh toratekha keva" - how so? This teaches that if a person heard something from a sage in the beit ha-midrash, he should not regard it as transient but rather as permanent. And what a person has learned, he must do and teach others to do, as it says (Devarim 5:1), "You shall learn them and keep them to do them." And so it says of Ezra (7:10), "He prepared his heart to study the Torah of G-d and to perform it," and afterwards it says, "And to teach statute and justice in Israel." (Avot de-Rabbi Natan 13:2)

Here we are not contrasting keva with that which is tafel, minor and secondary, but rather with that which is ara'i, transient or transitory, a passing experience. The baraita here speaks of this at two levels.

The latter portion of the baraita presents Ezra as an example of someone who made Torah keva. What was it that Ezra did? Above all, Ezra ensured the permanence of Torah. During his time, the Jews returning from the Babylonian exile had a very tenuous relationship to Torah. Chazal tell us (Tanna De-bei Eliyahu Rabba, Chapter 31) that when the Jews went into exile in Babylonia, they came to the prophet Yechezkel and said, "We are now exempt from Torah and mitzvot, because a slave whose master has sold him is no longer obligated to do the master's bidding." The prevalent conception in classical antiquity was that religion was only a function of geography and society: you worship the local gods of the country and society in which you find yourself. All the more so was this the feeling among the Jews in exile, since their entire national fabric had seemed to disintegrate. When they went to Babylonia, they felt that they were finished with avodat Hashem. (The Ramban [Shabbat 88a] says that the re-acceptance of Torah in Persia about which we read in Megillat Esther - "kiyemu ve-kibbelu" - came partly in response to this.)

We read in the books of Ezra and Nechemia that there was a great deal of assimilation and intermarriage among the Jews in Babylonia. Moreover, those who returned to Israel were certainly not of the more established strata, nor members of the intellectual or social elite. Ezra was faced with a tremendous challenge: to ensure that Torah would become permanent within that community. He made it clear that Torah is part of the essence of Klal Yisrael; it is not dependent upon geography, history or society - it is keva, permanent and essential. He did not just explain and extend Torah through rabbinic enactments, but saw to it that the people understood that adherence to Torah was not negotiable; it is part of what being Klal Yisrael means.

This is what Ezra did, and this is what each person needs to do within his own environment, as part of his or her historical and social responsibility. If you have learned some Torah, "ya'aseh viyelammed acher" - observe it and teach it to others. If you are in a community where Torah is in danger of disappearing, see to it that it does not disappear. Make it kavu'a. Make it clear that there is no vanishing American, English or French Jew. Judaism is here to stay. It is your responsibility to make it clear to yourself and to others that Torah and avodat Hashem are the very backbone of Judaism. Prove that all the sociological projections about the end of the Jewish people are nonsense. We are keva.

#### INTERNALIZING TORAH

However, before we get to this level, the baraita speaks of something else: If a person heard something from a sage in the beit ha-midrash, he should not regard it as transient but rather as permanent.

What does this mean? There are certain facets of our experience that we regard as being peripheral and temporal; we lose no sleep over the fact that

they are nothing more than that. They may be pleasant at the time, but you do not expect them to become a permanent aspect of your being. Does a person make any effort to remember what he reads in the newspaper? When you read it, you think it is important to know what is going on in the world. But unless you are a professional historian or an archivist, you do not really care whether you remember what happened ten years ago.

There are other experiences which are somewhat on the borderline between what you want to be permanent and what is ephemeral. Maybe you do not care if you remember what you read in the paper, but if you read a serious magazine, you may want to remember it. There are people who save their copies of The Atlantic Monthly or Commentary for many years. You would be happy to remember what you read in those magazines, and you would not feel that it is cluttering your mind - but you are not going to make a great effort to remember it. Similarly, a person who goes to see a play will probably regard it differently than he would the evening news, but he will not make the kind of effort to remember that a theater critic would in order to be able to analyze and compare it.

But there are things to which a person is committed to the degree that he wants them to be part of him. When he has that kind of experience, he wants it to be internalized, not to remain ephemeral. This is what the baraita tells us with regard to Torah. "Aseh toratekha keva" - see to it that it is ingrained and absorbed, that it becomes a part of you. This, of course, has implications for the nature of the experience at the time. A person who hears a symphony and wants it to become part of his musical repertoire will listen to it differently than a person for whom it is only so much background music. It is a different kind of exposure and experience; there is a certain intensity and seriousness. If you want something to remain with you, you must immerse yourself in it.

The gemara (Shabbat 31a) says that a person after his death is asked by the Heavenly tribunal: "Kavata ittim la-Torah, Did you set fixed times for Torah?" Similarly, the Rambam places great emphasis on this:

Every Israelite man is obligated in Torah study, whether he is poor or rich, healthy or suffering, in the vigor of youth or old and feeble. Even a man so poor that he is maintained by charity and goes begging from door to door, as also a man with a wife and children, is obligated to set aside fixed times to study Torah by day and by night, as it says (Yehoshua 1:8), "You shall meditate upon it day and night." (Hilkhot Talmud Torah 1:8)

One is not just obligated to study, but to set a fixed time for study. Why is this important? Because when a person is kove'a ittim la-Torah, he has indicated that Torah has a permanent place in his life. It is not one of those things which you do only if you have time. A person who enjoys playing basketball will play if he has time, but won't if he doesn't have time. On the other hand, there are certain things that you do regularly because you understand that these are part of your very being. The question is: How is Torah going to fit into a person's life experience? Will it be like reading a fine novel, or will it be part of one's regular daily schedule? Will it be part of the very essence of his being?

"Kavata ittim la-Torah" thus suggests keviut not only in terms of "making the time for it," but also in terms of what remains with you from your learning. What are you trying to accomplish when you learn? Is it enough to have gone through the motions, like going for a swim or a walk? The baraita is talking about keva in the sense of making it part of you. If you forget - you forget; you are considered an anus (coerced). But, ideally, you strive to build up an otzar, a treasury of Torah, and to have it remain with you forever.

#### THE LAYMAN'S OBLIGATION

Let us return to the baraita in Avot de-Rabbi Natan: "Aseh toratekha keva" - how so? This teaches that if a person heard something from a sage in the beit ha-midrash, he should not regard it as transient but rather as permanent.

There are several terms employed in this baraita which deserve further attention: "If a person heard something from a sage in the beit ha-midrash..." The gemara (Shabbat 31a) which discusses the six questions one is asked by the heavenly tribunal, three of which deal with talmud Torah, uses the same phrase: "Besh'a she-makhnisin adam la-din, At the time a person is brought to judgment." The gemara and the baraita are referring to the same adam, the same person. The adam referred to here is not the professional lamdan (scholar), not the kollel student, not the yeshiva head, but adam - a plain Jew, an ordinary layman. What is striking is that this kind of demand is made of a regular person - he should strive to make his Torah keva.

In certain respects, this an extraordinary demand, because one might have thought, "You can ask an ordinary person to engage in talmud Torah or to be in touch with Torah; but you cannot ask the average person to internalize his learning into something which is permanent." In other areas, we assume that there is a great difference between professional scholars and those who have a

dilettantish interest, and maybe even a love, for a certain field - we don't expect of the latter to try to build up a permanent repertoire of knowledge. A professional scholar will read books, take notes, and compare the different works he has studied; a music expert may remember symphonies and conductors, and compare them, examining their respective styles and interpretations. But an ordinary person just wants to enjoy himself when he goes to a concert.

However, regarding talmud Torah, the demand on the average person really is to make it a permanent part of himself. He cannot simply attend a shiur (class) and think, "Fine, I'll hear the shiur - it will be a nice experience, he's a good speaker. I'll enjoy it. I'll be enlightened. And I'll go home." You cannot treat it in the same manner as if you were going to the theater.

#### PLUMBING THE DEPTHS

This radical demand to make Torah keva, which one would not expect of a layman in other areas, represents a different kind of commitment. Of course, it reflects the tremendous importance we assign to Torah within our perception of the ordinary person's spiritual life. This is heightened by the concluding questions in the catalogue of the gemara in Shabbat. One might have thought that even if a layman is required to learn Torah, it is enough for him to engage in it in a shallow manner - let him learn bekiut, maybe some mishnayot, etc.; in-depth study is the realm of the ben-yeshiva or of the professional lamdan. Do we expect of someone who goes to a concert to read up on the literature? Of course not.

But the gemara indicates otherwise. A person is asked by the heavenly tribunal not just whether he made time for learning, but what was the quality of that learning: "Pilpata be-chokhma? Heivanta davar mi-toch davar? Did you debate matters of wisdom? Did you infer one thing from another?" Or did you just run through the material, superficially skimming it? This is far from what is expected precisely because it is superficial. The three questions in the gemara are connected: to the extent that a person is not mefalpel be-chokhma and does not strive to be meivin davar mi-toch davar, then he has not been kove'a itim - his learning lacks keva. In order for it to be keva, it must have a certain depth. One has to be engaged both emotionally and intellectually.

Consequently, in order to make your Torah keva, it has to be accompanied by a certain grappling and wrestling, trying to plumb the depths of what you are learning. Every day, the ordinary Jew - not just the rosh yeshiva - prays, "Avinu Av harachaman ... ten be-libenu lehavin u-lehaskil, Our merciful Father ... inspire our hearts to understand and to discern." He does not just ask G-d to give him the desire and ability to learn Torah, but rather lehavin u-lehaskil - to penetrate its depths. Of course, not everyone realizes this in great scope; but these are his values. And ultimately a person is judged not so much by his attainments as by his efforts.

I remember some years back talking to a person who was affiliated with a certain socio-religious movement here in Israel. He told me that in their communities, the ideal is that balebatim (laymen) should learn mishnayot. I said to him, "I can perhaps come to terms with the fact that balebatim end up learning mishnayot. Maybe that's the level of the people there - they can't get much beyond that. But should it be the limiting case of the ideal!? Is one striving for that?"

The Rambam talks about how to divide one's learning:

The time allotted to study should be divided into three parts. A third should be devoted to the Written Law; a third to the Oral Law [which basically means mishnayot]; and the last third should be spent in reflection, deducing conclusions from premises [the same terms we just saw: yavin ve-yaskil acharit davar me-reishito], developing implications of statements, comparing dicta, studying the hermeneutical principles by which the Torah is interpreted, until one knows the essence of these principles, and how to deduce what is permitted and what is forbidden from what one has learned from tradition. This is termed "gemara." (Hilkhos Talmud Torah 1:11)

Then the Rambam goes on to say (1:12) that this tripartite division applies only when a person starts learning. But when one has become more proficient, he should review the first two categories on set occasions, and devote himself almost solely to the final category:

[He] should devote all his days exclusively to the study of gemara according to his breadth of mind and maturity of intellect.

Here "gemara" means not necessarily a particular text, but rather an approach to and perspective on learning. It means studying in depth, not just reviewing dicta. Of course, at some point a person must acquire basic knowledge. But in terms of your ideal, where do you want to get to? Do you want to be left with just raw knowledge? That is not a keviut of Torah, that is not an internalization of Torah, and that is not a striving for the "ve-ha'arev na" that we pray for each morning - a sense of love and pleasure in Torah. The fullness and

the richness of talmud Torah is the "pilpata bi-chokhma," the "heivanta davar mi-toch davar." If one strives to master the complexity, the depth, the range of Torah, then he attains keva in its fullest sense - not just by skimming the surface, but by plumbing the depths.

#### MOTIVATION TO STUDY

I know many are troubled by the question of how to develop the requisite passion and yearning for Torah. People would like to find some formula which would enable one to attain this automatically. I can't speak of any formula, but I think there are certain directions which can be mentioned.

Perhaps it is most important to stress that this is not a phenomenon we can regard in isolation. The extent to which a person is committed to Torah is very much a function of his commitment to G-d, and therefore it is related to the place of avodat Hashem and yirat Shamayim (fear of Heaven) within his life generally. There may be some people who simply have a fancy, as it were, for Torah. But for most people, if the depth of yirat Shamayim is lacking, then it is unlikely that, of all the things to which they are exposed, specifically the Talmudic passage of "an ox which goes" is going to interest them most. There is a circular relation between yirat Shamayim and cleaving to Torah: the more you have the one, the more you have the other. One needs to develop a certain dialectic dynamic between these two. Inasmuch as a person is involved with Torah because he sees it as divine, as Torat Hashem, then the extent to which he relates to G-d is also going to have a great impact on how he relates to Torah.

Love of Torah is also not to be regarded in isolation in the social sense. The baraita (Avot 6:5) says that one of the ways in which Torah is acquired is through dibbuk chaverim (joining with friends). Apart from its value in sheer intellectual terms - finding people with whom you can talk - dibbuk chaverim is also valuable in the sense of being part of a community of Torah, which will reinforce your values.

I think there is also something to be said not only for dibbuk chaverim in a social sense but in a historical sense as well. A person should deepen his sense of belonging to a community of Torah spanning all generations. Although one cannot have direct contact with earlier generations, I think there is importance in getting to know this community. Among other things, this entails becoming familiar with Gedolei Yisrael.

A person should also make some effort to relate to this problem directly, by studying the books and statements of Chazal which speak of the value of Torah. Not all of these are equally effective for everyone, but surely in some way one should try to encounter them. Some people may find that the Vilna Gaon speaks to them, others may read Rav Kook, and others the Ramban. Some may find that mussar study in the classical sense speaks to them, and that is certainly valid.

It would be difficult for me to say that one thing will be effective for everyone, and that one should adopt only one approach to tackling the problem. It is a complex issue, but I think a person surely needs to recognize that we must address ourselves to it. Maybe at one time people lived in a world where all of this occurred through osmosis. However, most of us do not live in a world which breathes Torah all the time. That being the case, a person has to work on this in a way that at one time one didn't need to (and perhaps in certain communities today, one doesn't need to).

#### A MATTER OF VALUES

In summation, when we speak of Torah as a value, we are dealing with both a quantitative and a qualitative question. Quantitatively, how much time and effort does a person devote to it? This question applies both in terms of how many years he devotes to it on a full-time basis, and in terms of how much time he devotes to it daily or weekly once he has started working. Although we believe that "Echad ha-marbeh ve-echad ha-mamit, Whether one does much or little, what truly matters is that he should direct his heart to Heaven" (Menachos 110a) - this does not mean that it is immaterial whether you are marbeh or mam'it. To the contrary, it is very material, both as a reflection of what your values are, and as something which subsequently molds and shapes those values.

Moving to the qualitative level, a person is asked to make the Torah central to his life, to see that it has a keviut, a permanence, and is not just somewhere on the periphery. It should have a keviut within his own life, and also a keviut within his society, within his historical situation, analogous to Ezra. In practical terms, the element of keva means that, minimally, one has certain designated time frames for study, such that his Torah is not simply adventitious, but rather fundamental and inherent to his schedule. Furthermore, keviut means making Torah into one's framework and planning everything else around that, rather than planning everything else and sticking in a bit of Torah in the remaining space.

This is, of course, a large demand, and what is significant and striking about it is that this demand is made of each and every Jew. One cannot allow his social setting to determine for him whether or not Torah has a place in his life. It must

be clear that, wherever he ends up, Torah is a central value, a framework for his life, something which is inherent in his very being. Like Ezra, he must influence his community - be it a social, economic, professional or academic community - in order to make Torah kavua there as well.

For a ben-Torah, for a yeshiva student, there is an additional level. The baraita above speaks of "a person (adam) who hears something from a sage (chakham) in the beit ha-midrash." This distinguishes between "a person" and "a sage." Of course, a ben yeshiva should strive ultimately to be not just the adam who listens to the chakham, but to be the chakham himself. [This is a chapter from By His Light: Character and Values in the Service of G-d, Based on addresses by Harav Lichtenstein. The book can be ordered via our website: <http://www.vbm-torah.org/ralbooks.htm>.]

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From: Aish.com [newsletterserver@aish.com] Sent: Sunday, May 23, 2004 4:43 PM Subject: Kol Yaakov - Naso

RABBI BORUCH LEFF

Based and inspired by the teachings of Rav Yaakov Weinberg zt'l

NASO (Numbers 4:21-7:89) Permission to Protect

Have you ever met permissive parents -- the ones that worship the concept of "openness" so much that they don't mind exposing their kids to just about anything? "After all", they claim, "We teach our kids proper values, it doesn't really matter what the kids see or hear. Kids should be allowed to look into 'the real world' so they don't become naive. They'll simply reject foreign ideas antithetical to proper values."

Are these parents correct? Of course, not. A Rashi in this week's Torah portion, Naso, tells us why.

"Why was the section of the nazirite laws placed next to the laws of sotah, the suspected adulterous wife? To tell us that anyone who sees the sotah in her disgrace, will abstain from wine (one of the nazirite laws), since wine leads to adultery." (Rashi, Bamidbar 6:2)

The common question on this Rashi is that we would have thought the opposite. Wouldn't someone who sees a sinner, like the sotah, being humiliated, become inspired to not dare come close to transgression? If you saw your co-worker being yelled at for coming late, wouldn't you be extra careful not to come late yourself? So why does the Torah suggest that witnessing the sotah's embarrassment will make you more afraid that you'll sin? Why would one establish safeguards to avoid sin by refraining from wine, once he has seen a violation of the Torah in the sotah woman?

The answer is that our preconceived notion is not true. In reality, witnessing sin, no matter if we see the sinner being degraded or not, weakens our spirituality. Whenever someone "breaks the rules" in school, inevitably the rules become less hallowed and it's only a matter of time until "breaking the rules" becomes the rule. So too with the Torah. While G-d's "rules" and mitzvot will never cease, witnessing a breach in them automatically removes levels of respect and awe that we have for His commandments. We subconsciously feel that the transgression is no longer an untouchable and although we may never dream of doing it, it becomes a possibility. Once the slippery slope of possibility has been opened, terrible results will inevitably occur.

This is why Rabbi Moshe Feinstein writes (Igrot Moshe, Yoreh Deah 1:156) that just as it is a mitzvah to see and be involved in a mitzvah, so too it is a transgression to witness a transgression being performed where one can avoid it. By watching a violation of G-d's Torah, he writes, you are watching G-d being humiliated and disrespected. And this negatively affects your own service of G-d because, on some level, you lose respect for G-d as well.

So the nazir decides to enter the institution of the nazirite vows because he has seen the sinning sotah. He realizes that he temporarily needs special laws of holiness in order to return to his former state of awe for G-d's laws and commandments which have been breached.

Environment and nurture play vital roles in human development. There is no way of denying this fact. As Maimonides states (paraphrased): "It is the way of humankind to be drawn after the manners and actions of friends and countrymen. Therefore, one should connect with and befriend righteous people in order to learn from their ways and to distance oneself from wicked people." Maimonides uncharacteristically does not bring a source from a verse in the Torah as a proof. It is a simple fact of life.

What is not widely realized though is that anything and everything we see and experience becomes part of our nature. If we allow our kids to watch television and movies without any restraints, we open them up to potentially harmful influences. As Nicholas Johnson, former commissioner of the U.S. Federal Communications

Commission, once said, "All television is educational. The question is what does it teach?"

It is clear that the high increase among children of sexual promiscuousness and activity, violence and guns in schools, and the trend of reduced achievement and intelligence have its roots in the effects of television and movies. (See Lawrence Keleman's 'To Kindle a Soul' for detailed scientific studies and research.)

So much for openness in parenting. It is an experiment that has failed miserably. If we are responsible parents we must try our best to shield bad influences from our kids as much as possible. They should not witness thousands of killings and violence on TV year after precious year in their youth. If they are allowed to, they will lose sensitivity toward hurting others and become more vicious people.

What we see becomes part of us. We must try to avoid exposing our children to the evils of the world. Society recognizes that the 'movie ratings system' for kids is a positive thing. Although, as a result of the moral descent of this country, what used to be a relatively acceptable and tame PG rating, now probably is the equivalent of a severe 'R' rating, there are still some things that we deem inappropriate for children.

What we should be asking ourselves is: if we agree that it is inappropriate for children, why is it any more appropriate for us? We must be extremely careful with what we see and experience, as well.

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INSIGHTS History Lesson

"On the first day, Nachshon ben Aminadav, prince of Yehuda, brought his offerings."

At the inauguration of the Mishkan, the princes of the twelve tribes of Yisrael each brought identical donations. These donations contained within them a symbolic "history lesson" depicting the history of the world from Adam onwards. What was the significance of this historical panorama?

The silver bowl that they brought alluded to Adam, the first man, for the gematria (numerical value) of word ke'aras kesef is 930 - the years of Adam's life. It was made of silver which hints to the fact that Adam kept six commandments of the Torah, for the Torah is likened to silver. The weight of the bowl was 130 shekels symbolizing the 130 years that Adam lived before his successor, Shes was born. It was through Shes that mankind was established.

Apart from this silver bowl, they brought a silver basin. The gematria of mizrak ehad kesef ("one silver bowl") is 520. Noach did not have children until the age of 500, and 20 years before this event, G-d decreed the Flood. The word mizrak is from the same root as "to be thrown out," Noach was an outsider in a generation that scoffed at his building of the ark. This basin was also silver to represent the Torah, for in addition to the six mitzvot that Adam observed, Noach kept a seventh mitzva - not to eat the limbs or the flesh of a living animal. The basin weighed 70 shekels corresponding to the seventy nations that are descended from Noach who are commanded to observe these seven mitzvot to this day.

The offerings of one bullock, one ram and one lamb as olah offerings hint to Avraham, Yitzchak and Yaakov. The bullock symbolizes the hospitality of Avraham when he ran to bring oxen for his guests. The ram is reminder of Yitzchak's willingness to be bound on the altar even though a ram was offered in his stead. The lamb represents Yaakov who separated his herds from Lavan.

The two oxen which were offered as shlamim allude to Moshe and Aharon who made peace (shalom) between the Jewish People and their Father in Heaven.

The kaf, spoon, represents the giving of the Torah. The Torah is called a kaf because kaf can also mean "hand" - the Torah was given to us directly be the "Hand" of G-d. The spoon weighed 10 shekels, corresponding to the Ten Commandments. It too was gold, alluding to the Torah. The kaf was filled with ketoret incense. The gematria of ketoret is 613 - the number of mitzvot in the Torah.

When Adam sinned the Divine Presence withdrew from this world. The message of the symbolic "history lesson" of the princes' offerings was that with the inauguration of the Mishkan which these offerings honored, the Divine Presence rested on the world once again.

- Bamidbar Rabba; Tzror Chamoh