



## Chag HaShavuos Is Called the “Time of the Giving of Our Torah” It Is the Day that HKB”H Gave the Torah to the Original Jewish Neshamos

Shabbas parshas Bamidbar approaches us auspiciously. Hence, it is worthwhile exploring the following statement in the Shulchan Aruch (O.C. 428, 4): **“ולעולם קורין פרשת במדבר—סיני קודם עצרת”**—**we always read parshas Bamidbar prior to Atzeres.** The source and rationale for this practice are found in Tosafos (Megillah 31b). They explain that by reading parshas Bamidbar on the Shabbas prior to Chag HaShavuos, we interrupt between the curses recited in parshas Bechukosai and this joyous festival.

Let us embellish this thought by providing another rationale for this practice. We find a wonderful allusion in this parsha as to why HKB”H opted to give the Torah to Yisrael and not to the other nations of the world. In the Midrash Yalkut Shimoni (Bamidbar 684), the sages address the juxtaposition of the conclusion of sefer Vayikra—in parshas Bechukosai—and the opening pesukim of sefer Bamidbar. Parshas Bechukosai concludes (Vayikra 27, 34): **“אלה המצוות אשר צוה ה' את משה אל: ‘בני ישראל בהר סיני’—these are the mitzvos that Hashem commanded Moshe to convey to Bnei Yisrael at Har Sinai.** Parshas Bamidbar begins (Bamidbar 1, 1): **“וידבר ה' אל משה: ‘במדבר סיני באהל מועד באחד לחודש השני בשנה השנית לצאתם מארץ מצרים’—Hashem spoke to Moshe in the midbar of Sinai, in the Ohel Mo'ed, on the first of the second month, in the second year after their exodus from the land of Mitzrayim, saying, “Take a census of the entire assembly of Bnei Yisrael, according to their families, according to their father’s house.”** Here is the pertinent passage from the Midrash:

**“בשעה שקיבלו ישראל את התורה נתקנאו אומות העולם בהן, מה ראו להתקרב יותר מן האומות, סתם פיהן הקב”ה, אמר להן הביאו לי ספר יוחסין שלכם, שנאמר (תהלים צו-ז) הבו לה' משפחות עמים, כשם שבני מביאין (במדבר א-יח) ויתילדו על משפחותם, לכך מגנאם בראש הספר הזה אחר המצוות (ויקרא כז-לד), אלה המצוות אשר צוה ה' את משה אל בני ישראל בהר סיני, ואחר כך, וידבר ה' במדבר סיני שאו את ראש כל עדת בני ישראל, שלא זכו ליטול את התורה אלא בשביל היוחסין שלהן”.**

**The nations of the world were envious of Yisrael when they received the Torah. They protested: “Why are they more deserving than any of the other nations?” HKB”H silenced them. He said to them: “Bring Me your genealogical record . . . as My children do . . .” Therefore, He counted them at the beginning of this sefer, after recording the mitzvos . . . Because they only merited taking the Torah because of their genealogy.**

The commentaries, each in his own unique way, struggle to explain the connection between the **“sefer yuchsin”** (genealogical record, family-tree, pedigree) and the giving of the Torah to Yisrael. Furthermore, at first glance, this passage seems to contradict an explicit teaching in the Mishnah (Avos 2, 12): **“והתקן עצמך ללמוד תורה שאינה ירושה לך”**—**prepare yourself to study Torah, since it does not come to you as an inheritance.** We see that the acquisition of the Torah is not inherited automatically, it requires effort and must be earned. We will endeavor to reconcile these apparent discrepancies.

## Is Chag HaShavuot Truly the “Time of the Giving of Our Torah”?

We will begin to shed some light on the subject by introducing a tremendous question posed by the Magen Avraham (O.C. 494) in the name of the Rama of Pano in his Asarah Ma'amarot. The festival of Shavuot is referred to as **“Zman Matan Toraseinu”—the Time of the Giving of our Torah**. It is the 50<sup>th</sup> day of the Counting of the Omer and with our current calendars, it always falls out on the 6<sup>th</sup> of Sivan. This does not really agree with the following teachings in the Gemara (Shabbas). First of all (ibid. 87b), we learn that the first day of Pesach, the day of the exodus from Mitzrayim, was a Thursday. Additionally (ibid. 86b), we learn that everyone agrees that: **“כשבת ניתנה תורה לישראל”—the Torah was given to Yisrael on Shabbas**.

According to these teachings, Sefiras HaOmer began on a Friday, the day after the first day of Pesach. This would mean that the completion of the forty-nine days of the Omer was on a Thursday. Thus, the 50<sup>th</sup> day would have been a Friday. Yet, we learned that everyone agrees that the Torah was given to Yisrael on Shabbas; that would have been the 51<sup>st</sup> day. So, how can we call Chag HaShavuot, which is the 50<sup>th</sup> day, **“Zman Matan Toraseinu”**? According to this calculation, the Torah was actually given on the 7<sup>th</sup> of Sivan.

Clearly, this apparent difficulty has been reconciled in many different ways. In this essay, however, we intend to delight in the sacred words of the Kedushas Levi (Shavuot). He relies on the teaching in the Gemara (ibid. 88a) that on Wednesday, HKB”H instructed Moshe (Shemos 19, 10): **“קדשתם היום ומחר”** וכבסו שמלותם, והיו נכונים ליום השלישי, כי ביום השלישי ירד ה' לעיני כל העם—**prepare them today and tomorrow, and they shall wash their clothing. Let them be ready for the third day, for on the third day, Hashem shall descend before the eyes of all the people on Har Sinai**. Thus, the Torah should, indeed, have been given on Friday, the third day of preparation. This did not happen, because Moshe Rabeinu saw fit to add an extra day on his own. In fact, we learn that HKB”H agreed with him; thus, the Torah was actually given to Yisrael on Shabbas.

The Kedushas Levi acknowledges that Moshe Rabeinu added a day of his own accord and that, in fact, the Torah was given on

the 51<sup>st</sup> day, the 7<sup>th</sup> of Sivan. Nevertheless, Hashem’s directive: **“Let them be ready for the third day, for on the third day, Hashem shall descend before the eyes of all the people on Har Sinai”**—is in effect forevermore. In other words, HKB”H planned to give Yisrael the Torah on the 50<sup>th</sup> day; also, Yisrael were prepared to receive the Torah on that day; they had been cleansed of all previous corruption and contamination. Therefore, the brilliant light of Matan Torah is revealed on this day annually, for all eternity. Hence, the appellation **“Zman Matan Toraseinu”—the Time of the Giving of Our Torah**—justifiably applies to Chag HaShavuot.

Notwithstanding, the explanation of the Kedushas Levi requires further elaboration. Albeit, HKB”H intended to give Yisrael the Torah on the 6<sup>th</sup> of Sivan, and Yisrael were ready and worthy of receiving the Torah on that day; in reality, however, Moshe added a day of his own accord, and HKB”H acquiesced. Thus, Yisrael received the Torah on the 7<sup>th</sup> of Sivan and not on the 6<sup>th</sup>. So, why did HKB”H see fit to reveal the incredible light of Matan Torah annually specifically on the 6<sup>th</sup> of Sivan—the day He originally designated for giving Yisrael the Torah?

## Everything Is Complete and Perfect in the World Called “Kol Yisrael”

As a loyal servant in the presence of his master, I will attempt to clarify the words of the great tzaddik, the Kedushas Levi. We will refer to a fundamental principle we learn from the teachings of the holy Maggid of Kozhnitz, zy”a, in Avodas Yisrael (Ha’azinu). His sacred words address the following passuk (Devarim 32, 1): **האזינו השמים ואדברה ותשמע הארץ אמרי**” פ”י. Here is his interpretation:

**“Hearken, O heavens, and I will speak; and may the earth hear the words of my mouth.”** When a tzaddik wishes to return the people of his generation to good standing and is constantly speaking words of “mussar” to them; yet, his words fail to penetrate their hearts, because their hearts are made of stone, due their numerous transgressions; and they have become attached to the klipah, chas v’shalom, G-d help us; it is advisable that he speak “mussar” to the root of their neshamos, where the klipah has no hold. This is the meaning of **“Hearken, O heavens, and I will speak”**—that is, to the root of the

**neshamos, which are called “heavens”; as a result, “the earth will hear the words of my mouth”—referring to man’s material being.**

Let us elaborate. Our sacred sefarim teach us that the root of man’s neshamah does not descend to earth; it remains up in the heavens. Only a tiny portion of the neshamah’s light descends to enter man’s physical body and being. It is only when man successfully sanctifies the tiny portion of his neshamah residing with his body—via Torah-study and the service of Hashem—that the two parts of the neshamah reconnect. At that point, the root of the neshamah above illuminates the tiny portion below with a brilliant, intense light. This enables man to overcome his yetzer and attain even higher levels of Torah knowledge and service of Hashem.

This explains the insight of the Avodas Yisrael very nicely. As we have learned, the heavenly root of every Jewish neshamah is totally unaffected by the sins committed below. Therefore, when a tzaddik is unable to admonish the earthly portion of the neshamah due to the enormity of the damage and imperviousness of the heart resulting from the sins, iniquities and transgressions: **It is advisable that he speak “mussar” to the root of their neshamos, where the klipah has no hold.**

In other words, the tzaddik must address the root of that person’s neshamah up above that has been totally unaffected by that person’s sins. It will then influence and illuminate the small branch of the neshamah below clothed in a physical body. This is precisely what Moshe Rabeinu—who possessed this power—was doing with his pronouncement: **“הַאֲזִינוּ הַשָּׁמַיִם וְאֶדְבָּרָה”**. He was instructing the untainted part of the neshamah in the heavens to listen and heed what he was about to say. As a consequence: **“וְתִשְׁמַע הָאָרֶץ אִמְרֵי פִי”**—the part of the neshamah down on earth also heard and obeyed his words.

In my humble opinion, it appears that this is precisely the lesson conveyed by the Noam Elimelech (Devarim) in his interpretation of the formula of the **“l’shem yichud,”** which is recited before the performance of various mitzvot: **“בְּשֵׁם כָּל יִשְׂרָאֵל”—in the name of “Kol Yisrael.”** Seeing as there is no perfect tzaddik on earth who has acted only virtuously and has not sinned (Koheles 7, 20), how is it possible to perform

any act of kedushah with our tainted limbs? The solution is to include oneself among the congregation of Yisrael; for there is a world known as **“Kol Yisrael.”** It is a complete and perfect world without any flaws; because Yisrael as a whole are tzaddikim, as it is written (Yeshayah 60, 21): **“And Your people are all tzaddikim.”** Hence, even if individuals occasionally sin, nevertheless, as a whole, they always retain their kedushah. They are devoid of a Satan and any serious defects, chalilah. Their image remains constantly etched above and is called **“Adam Kadmon.”** There, sin has no power or ill effect. So, if a person connects with this united entity, his tainted, blemished limb is rectified with a heavenly kedushah. He is then able to perform said mitzvah or deed.

In light of our current discussion, it appears that we can explain what the Noam Elimelech means as follows: All of Yisrael’s neshamos below are merely tiny offshoots that have descended from their root neshamos above. Therefore, all of Yisrael’s neshamos that remain untainted by sin and transgression are described as **“Kol Yisrael.”** So, by connecting with the root of his neshamah in the pure, unblemished universe of **“Kol Yisrael”** before performing a particular mitzvah, a Jew can fulfill that mitzvah perfectly.

### Every Jew Has a Portion in Olam HaBa

Based on the insight of the Noam Elimelech, we can better comprehend the words of the Mishnah (Sanhedrin 90a) that are customarily recited before studying Pirkei Avos: **“כָּל יִשְׂרָאֵל יֵשׁ לָהֶם חֵלֶק לְעוֹלָם הַבָּא, שְׁנֵאמֹר וְעֹמֵךְ כּוֹלֵם צְדִיקִים לְעוֹלָם יִירְשׁוּ אֶרֶץ נֹצֵר מִטַּעֲמֵי מַעֲשֵׂה יָדֶיךָ לְהִתְפָּאֵר”—all Yisrael has a share of Olam HaBa, as it says (ibid.): “And your people are all tzaddikim; they shall inherit the land forever; they are the stem of My plantings, My handiwork, in which to take pride.”** The commentaries ask how is it possible to say: **“All Yisrael has a share of Olam HaBa”?** After all, there are total reshaim, who have forfeited their share of Olam HaBa due to the extent of their wickedness.

Nevertheless, based on what we have learned, we can posit that the Mishnah’s statement refers to the essence and root of the neshamah that always remains in the heavens above in the universe of **“Kol Yisrael.”** Thus, we can read the Mishnah as follows: In the world called **“Kol Yisrael,”** where the roots of Yisrael’s neshamos reside, every Jew has a portion in Olam

HaBa, since the damaging effects of one's sins do not reach there. This can be substantiated by the conclusion of the passuk: **"And your people are all tzaddikim; they shall inherit the land forever."** It is teaching us that every Jew is essentially a tzaddik and deserves to inherit a portion of Eretz Yisrael le'asid la'vo, due to the part of his neshamah above in the universe of **"Kol Yisrael."** For, even a rasha is only a rasha with respect to the small portion of his neshamah that has descended to earth. With respect to the main portion of his neshamah, which remains above in the universe of **"Kol Yisrael,"** he is still a virtual tzaddik.

That being the case, a person might say to himself: Why should I exert myself to sanctify the earthbound portion of my neshamah within my body? After all, the root of my neshamah in the heavens remains holy, untainted and intact. Therefore, HKB"H replies: **"They are the stem of My plantings, My handiwork, in which to take pride."** The reason the root of the neshamah is intact is because I created it pure and unblemished; it is beyond man's reach and he has no part of it. Instead, it is man's obligation to strive to rectify and sanctify the part of the neshamah below on earth that has been entrusted to him.

With this premise, we can begin to appreciate the words of the Avodas Yisrael. As we have learned, the root and majority of every Jew's neshamah in the heavens remains unblemished by his sins. Hence, when the tzaddik sees that his admonitions are falling on deaf ears—that they are unable to influence the earthbound portion of a person's neshamah—due to the imperviousness of their hearts caused by their extensive sins and iniquities: **It is advisable that he speak "mussar" to the root of their neshamah, where the klipah has no hold.**

In other words, a tzaddik possesses the power to speak words of rebuke to the untainted root of a person's neshamah. As a result, the root of the neshamah is able to influence its offshoot that is clothed by a human body down on earth. Moshe Rabeinu, the foremost navi, possessed this unique ability. In this capacity, he addressed the heavens: **"האזינו השמים ואדברה"—hearken, O heavens, and I will speak**—he was commanding the unblemished part of the neshamah in the heavens to listen and heed his words of rebuke; so that: **"ותשמע הארץ אמרי פי"**—the vulnerable part of the neshamah down on earth would also hear and respond to his words of rebuke.

## Hashem Descended into the Universe of "Kol Yisrael"

Following this line of reasoning, we will now elaborate on the words of the Kedushas Levi. Recall that he asserts that the reality that HKB"H intended to give Yisrael the Torah on the third day of preparation endures forever. In fact, HKB"H kept His word and gave Yisrael the Torah on the third day. However, He did not give it to the branches of the neshamos attached to physical bodies down below on earth; He only gave it to the roots of the neshamos of Yisrael in the heavens above. For, had the roots of the neshamos not received the Torah first, their branches below on earth would not have been able and worthy to receive the Torah.

This explains HKB"H's statement magnificently: **"Let them be ready for the third day, for on the third day, Hashem shall descend before the eyes of all the people on Har Sinai."** Here HKB"H specifies that He will descend **"before the entire nation"**—implying that it will be in the presence of the root neshamos in the universe called **"Kol Yisrael."** As we learned from the Noam Elimelech, in that world, all the neshamos are united. For this reason, the voice of Hashem was not actually heard down on earth on that day, because on that day, the Torah was only given to the root neshamos of Yisrael in the heavens.

Moshe Rabeinu, however, wisely understood that it is imperative to also give the Torah directly to the offshoots of the neshamos of Yisrael down on earth. Therefore, of his own accord, he added a day of preparation. Thus, HKB"H actually gave the Torah to the branches of the neshamos of the people of Yisrael on the following day with the full fanfare of thunder and lightning. It turns out, therefore, that the two days of Matan Torah are intimately related. Initially, HKB"H gave the Torah on the 6<sup>th</sup> of Sivan, the third day of preparation, **"before the eyes of all the people"**—to the root neshamos of Yisrael above. After the additional day added by Moshe, on the 7<sup>th</sup> of Sivan, HKB"H gave the Torah to the branches of the neshamos of Yisrael below. This is the implication of the passuk (Shemos 19, 20): **"וירד ה' על הר סיני"—Hashem descended upon Har Sinai.**

We now have cause to rejoice. We have successfully shed some light on the profound words of the Kedushas Levi. HKB”H established the festival of Shavuos—“Zman Matan Toraseinu”—on the 50<sup>th</sup> day of Sefiras HaOmer, the 6<sup>th</sup> of Sivan, the third day of preparation. For, on that day, he gave the root neshamos of Yisrael the Torah—even though He did not actually give the Torah to Yisrael down on earth until the next day, the 7<sup>th</sup> of Sivan. This explains why we call Chag HaShavuos **“Zman Matan Toraseinu.”** For, our main cause for celebration and joy is that the roots of our neshamos were privileged to receive the Torah in the heavens above.

Let us add a precious point related to a passuk in parshas Vaeschanan (Devarim 5, 19): **“את הדברים האלה דיבר ה' אל כל קהלכם: אתה ודברך האש הענן והערפל קול גדול ולא יסף”**—these words Hashem spoke to your entire congregation on the mountain, from the midst of the fire, the cloud and the fog—a powerful voice that was never-ending. Rashi interprets the end of this passuk as the Targum does: **“קל רב ולא פסק”**—a powerful voice that never ceases. Rashi concludes: **“כי קולו חזק וקיים לעולם”**—for, His voice is strong and lasts forever. The words of HKB”H are eternal, constant and do not stop even for a second. But what is the purpose of this magnificent voice if we cannot hear it down below? Based on our current discussion, the answer is simple. This inspirational voice of Matan Torah was heard by the root neshamos of Yisrael on the third day of preparation. It is constant and is never interrupted, because HKB”H continues to give the Torah to the root neshamos of Yisrael constantly.

In this manner, we can better appreciate the explanation of the Turei Zahav (O.C. 47, 5) concerning the formula of the berachah recited before studying Torah: **“נותן התורה”**. These words are formulated in the present tense—as opposed to **“נתן התורה”**, in the past tense. He writes that this indicates that the Almighty gives us His Torah constantly, every day. Therefore, when we study it, He presents us with new insights and interpretations continually. In keeping with this discussion, HKB”H gives us the Torah continually via the roots of our neshamos above. It descends from there to influence and imbue the branches of our neshamos below on earth.

So, on every Chag HaShavuos, on which the Torah was given to Yisrael, the events of Matan Torah are repeated. As we learn from our sacred sefarim, on every festival and holiday, the miracle that occurred back then occurs again now. Now, on the original Chag HaShavuos, on the 6<sup>th</sup> of Sivan, HKB”H did not give the Torah to Yisrael down below; He only gave it to their neshamos above. The same thing transpires on every Chag HaShavuos. Even though we do not actually see or hear Matan Torah, nevertheless HKB”H gives the Torah to the roots of our neshamos above. Hence, we call it **“Zman Matan Toraseinu.”**

### Count the Head of Every Member of Yisrael

Continuing on our sacred journey, we will now interpret that which is written at the beginning of our parsha (Bamidbar 1, 2): **“שאו את ראש כל עדת בני ישראל למשפחותם לכית אבותם”**—take a census of the entire assembly of Bnei Yisrael. We have learned in the Gemara (Berachos 16b): **“אין קורין אבות אלא לשלשה”**—only three are referred to as Avos. To explain this, we will refer to what the Megaleh Amukos (Lech Lecha) wrote regarding HKB”H’s promise to Avraham Avinu (Bereishis 12, 2): **“ואעשך לגוי גדול ואברכך ואגדלה שמך והיה ברכה”**—and I will make of you a great nation; I will bless you, and I will make your name great, and you will be a berachah. In his second explanation, Rashi comments: **“And I will make of you a great nation”: This refers to that which they say in Shemoneh Esreh, “G-d of Avraham”; “and I will bless you”—this refers to that which they say, “God of Yitzchak”; “and I will make your name great”—this refers to that which they say “G-d of Yaakov.”**

According to the Megaleh Amukos, with these words, HKB”H promised that the three holy Avos would be the root for all Jewish lives (“nefesh”), spirits (“ruach”) and souls (“neshamah”). He specifies that Avraham is the root of all the lives; Yitzchak is the root of all the spirits; and Yaakov is the root of all the neshamos. Thus, every individual Jew is comprised of all three Avos.

We can suggest based on this premise that this was the purpose of the directive HKB”H gave Moshe Rabeinu: **“Take a**

census (literally: ‘elevate the head’) of the entire assembly of Bnei Yisrael, according to their families, according to their fathers’ house . . .” HKB”H wanted him to elevate the root of the neshamos of Yisrael, which represents their “head,” so that they would merit receiving the Torah at their roots above. Then, the roots would transmit the Torah to their branches below located within physical bodies. The passuk then goes on to explain in whose merit the “head” of Yisrael received the Torah: “According to their families, according to their fathers’ house”—namely, in the merit of the three holy Avos who are the root of the neshamos of Yisrael.

It is with great pleasure that we will now explain the elucidation in the Midrash related to this passuk: **The nations of the world were envious of Yisrael when they received**

the Torah. They protested: “Why are they more deserving than any of the other nations?” HKB”H silenced them. He said to them: “Bring Me your genealogical record . . . as My children do . . .” Yisrael have a distinguished lineage; they are the descendants of the three holy Avos—the root of their neshamos. As such, they deserve to receive the Torah initially at their roots above. Hence, they are able, subsequently, to receive the Torah below. The nations of the world, however, who do not possess this distinguished lineage, are not worthy or capable of attaining the holy Torah. To prove its point, the Midrash cites our passuk: “Elevate the head of the entire assembly of Bnei Yisrael”—elevate the root of the neshamos of Yisrael--“according to their families, according to their fathers’ house”—in the merit of the holy Avos.



Our thanks and blessings are given to those who donated for the publication of our weekly dvar Torah for the merit of **אחינו בני ישראל**

Family Madeb - לעילוי נשמת  
their dear mother  
Lea bat Virgini ע”ה

Arthur & Randi Luxenberg לזכות  
of their wonderfull parents, children and grandchildren  
אחינו נשמת His Father ר' יצחק יהודה בן ר' אברהם ע”ה

To receive the mamarim by email: [mamarim@shvileipinchas.com](mailto:mamarim@shvileipinchas.com)