



## The Fantastic Relationship between Parshas Bamidbar and Chag HaShavuos We Receive the Torah Anew Annually on Chag HaShavuos to Reveal the Portions of the Torah that Remained Concealed in the Mouth of HKB”H

We always read parshas Bamidbar on the Shabbas kodesh preceding Chag HaShavuos—“zman matan toraseinu.” In the words of the Shulchan Aruch (O.C. 428, 4): “זלעולם קורין פרשת במדבר סיני קודם עצרת”. The source for this practice is the commentary of Tosafos on the Gemara (Megillah 31b) related to the practice instituted by Ezra HaSofer for Jews to read the “tochachah” in parshas Bechukosai prior to Shavuos and the “tochachah” in parshas Ki Savo prior to Rosh HaShanah. The rationale for this is: “כדי שתכלה השנה וקללותיה”—**so that the year will end along with its curses**. This applies because Chag HaShavuos represents the Rosh HaShanah for the fruits of the tree (R.H. 16a).

Tosafos explain that we intersperse parshas Bamidbar between parshas Bechukosai and Chag HaShavuos to separate the curses from the festival we call Atzeres. In other words, parshas Bamidbar constitutes an iron barrier between the “tochachah” in parshas Bechukosai and the Rosh HaShanah for the fruits of the tree.

### Chag HaShavuos Is the Day of Judgment for the Giving of the Torah for the Year to Come

Thus, it is fitting that we explain the relationship between parshas Bamidbar and “zman matan toraseinu.” We will begin by introducing what the Shela hakadosh (Maseches Shavuos, Ner Mitzvah, 9) writes in the name of the Tola’at Yaakov. He asserts that Chag HaShavuos is a day of judgment for the

neshamos of Yisrael—compared to the “**fruits of the tree**” that emerged from HKB”H’s tree of neshamos. They are judged as to whether or not they studied Torah and performed mitzvos adequately during the past year.

Thus, we learn that Chag HaShavuos is the judgment day of Matan Torah. Did we use our time properly during the past year to study Torah to renew and reveal our personal portions of the Torah. We express our desire to do so in the tefilos of Shabbas with the phrase: “זתן חלקנו בתורתך”—**and grant us our portion in Your Torah**. If we did take advantage of our opportunities to learn Torah, then HKB”H will provide us with an abundance of new Torah insights on Chag HaShavuos for the year to come.

We will now introduce the wonderful, sacred insight of the Sefas Emes apropos this subject (Shavuos 5661). He explains that when the Mishnah states that we are judged on Shavuos regarding “פירות האילן”, it is referring to novel interpretations of the Torah, which are akin to fruit emerging from a tree. After all, the holy Torah is compared to a tree in the passuk (Mishlei 3, 18): “עץ חיים—**it is a tree of life for those who cling to it**. He writes that just like a tree produces new fruit annually, so, too, new fruits of the Torah are produced annually. Therefore, the renewal of the Torah, the Tree of Life, occurs annually on Shavuos, when the fruits of the tree are assessed. For this reason, one of the appellations of this festival is “**Yom HaBikkurim**”—

**the day of the first fruit.** According to the Midrash, all the portions of the Torah were given at Har Sinai as potential; however, they came to fruition as actual teachings at their appropriate times in the future. Thus, Jews receive their renewed portion of the Torah on Chag HaShavuot to be revealed in its proper place and time.

### Show Me Your Genealogy

With this introduction, we can now proceed to explain the relationship between parshas Bamidbar and Chag HaShavuot—“zman matan toraseinu.” Let us refer to the Midrash Yalkut Shimoni (Bamidbar) related to the passuk (Bamidbar 1, 2): “שאו את ראש כל בני ישראל למשפחותם לבית אבותם”—**take a census of the entire assembly of Bnei Yisrael, according to their families, according to their father’s house.** Here is a translation of the passage: **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 . . . like My children bring . . .” 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 are bewildered by the objection of the nations of the world: **“Why are they more deserving than any of the other nations?”** After all, the Torah states explicitly (Devarim 33, 2): “ה’ מסיני בא וזרח משעיר למנו הופיע מהר פארן ואתה מרבבות קודש מימינו אש דת למנו”—**Hashem came from Sinai, and He shone forth to them from Seir; He appeared from Har Paran, and He came with some of the myriads of the holy; from His right hand, He presented a fire of law to them.** Rashi explains: **He presented it to the children of Eisav (who dwelled in Seir), so that they would have the opportunity to accept the Torah; but they did not want it. He also went to Har Paran and presented it there to the children of Yishmael, so that they would have the opportunity to accept it; but they did not want it.** The other nations were offered the Torah, but they

refused it. HKB”H only gave the Torah to Yisrael after the other nations refused it. Hence, their objection does not make any sense.

To explain the matter, let us refer to the Gemara (Gittin 60b): “אמר רבי יוחנן, לא כרת הקב”ה ברית עם ישראל אלא בשביל דברים שבעל פה, שנאמר כי על פי הדברים האלה כרתי אתך ברית ואת ישראל.” **Rabbi Yochanan said: HKB”H only entered into a covenant with Yisrael on account of the Oral Law, as it states (Shemos 34, 27): “For on account of these words have I entered a covenant with you and with Yisrael.”** In Tiferes Yisrael (Chapter 68), the Maharal of Prague explains that even if the nations of the world had accepted the Torah, they would have only accepted Torah she’b’chsav—the Written Law—in its simplest form. They would not have accepted or deduced all the expositions and deeper meanings revealed by our sages in Torah she’b’al peh.

In this light, we can begin to comprehend the objection of the other nations: **“מה ראו להתקרב יותר מן האומות”**. Indeed, HKB”H initially approached the nations of the world and offered them the Torah, but He was only offering them the Torah she’b’chsav, so that they would fulfill the mitzvos in their simplest forms. He did not plan to give them the secrets contained in Torah she’b’al peh. This was what they argued: Why did Yisrael deserve to receive Torah she’b’al peh more so than the other nations?

We must now, however, endeavor to comprehend HKB”H’s retort as presented in the Midrash: **HKB”H silenced them. He said to them: “Bring Me your genealogical record.”** How does their genealogy justify the giving of the Torah to Yisrael? Furthermore, this seems to contradict a 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 Torah is not inherited automatically. A person must exert himself and study it diligently; it must be earned.

**“For Hashem grants wisdom; from His mouth comes wisdom and understanding”**

We will begin to shed some light on the subject by introducing an intriguing passage in the Midrash (S.R.

41, 3) related to the passuk (Shemos 31, 18): **“He gave to Moshe, when He finished speaking with him.”** הדא הוא דכתיב כי ה' יתן חכמה מפיו דעת ותבונה... למה הדבר דומה, למלך שהיה לו בן, בא בנו מבית הספר מוצא תמחוי לפניו, נטל אביו חתיכה אחת ונתנה לו, מה עשה בנו, אמר לו איני מבקש אלא מזה שבתוך פוך, מה עשה נתנו לו, ולמה על שהיה מחבבו נתן לו מתוך פיו, הוי כי ה' יתן חכמה, וכל מי שהוא מחבבו יותר מפיו דעת ותבונה.” The Midrash cites a passuk in Mishlei (2, 6): **“For Hashem grants wisdom”; but to him whom He loves greatly: “from His mouth are intelligence and understanding.”** Here is the first parable presented in the Midrash to explain the passuk: **To what is this comparable? To a king who had a young son. When his son returned from school, he found a large platter of food in front of his father. The father took a piece of food from the platter and gave it to him. What did his son do? He said, “I only want from that which is in your mouth.” What did he (the king) do? He gave it to him. Why? Because he loved him (his son) so much, he gave him from that which was in his mouth.** Similarly, it is thus that **“Hashem grants wisdom.” But to everyone that He loves more, He gives “from his mouth intelligence and understanding.”**

I would like to present a wonderful explanation for the sages' enigmatic analogy—that we want HKB”H to give us the knowledge and understanding that is inside His mouth, so to speak. The Chasam Sofer teaches us an important principle. At Har Sinai, we only received Torah she'b'chsav and parts of Torah she'b'al peh that explain how to perform the mitzvos. Large portions of Torah she'b'al peh, however, remained stored and concealed with HKB”H. It is the will of HKB”H that Jews in every single generation will study Torah diligently and arduously. Thus, they will reveal the portions of the Torah that have not been revealed, yet. This encompasses novel understandings of halachah and “aggadah” (homiletic and allegorical passages), both in the overt Torah and the mystical Torah, which are uncovered by Torah-scholars in every generation. Torah-scholars are urged to strive to find novel interpretations and understandings of Hashem's Torah.

In his Derashos, the Chasam Sofer adds that HKB”H endowed the souls of Yisrael with additional “binah”—

intuition—enabling them to unveil the treasures of the Torah that are still concealed. Here are his sacred words: **“כי התורה הקדושה טמונה בתוכה כל טוב ה' וכל אוצרותיו, אך התחבולה להוציא המטמונים ההמה מסר הקב”ה בחשאי לישראל, רצוני לומר שנטע הקב”ה בטבע תולדותם בינה יתירה, מה שלא נמצא כן לכל עם ולשון, ולהם לא הראה כי All of Hashem's good and treasures are stored and concealed inside the holy Torah. The key to unlocking those hidden treasures was given to Yisrael secretly and privately by HKB”H; he implanted in their innermost nature—in their DNA, so to speak—additional “binah.” No other people or nation possess this; they were only shown the simple, plain aspects of the Torah; hence, they opted not to accept it.**

It is important to note that this in no way contradicts the following teaching in the Midrash (V.R. 22, 1): **“מקרא, משנה, הלכות, תלמוד, תוספתות, אגדות, ואפילו מה שתלמיד ותיק עתיד לומר לפני רבו, כולן נאמרו למשה בסיני”**—all the elements of Torah, even novel interpretations that were destined to be introduced in the future, were all transmitted to Moshe at Sinai. HKB”H revealed to Moshe Rabeinu the entire Torah including hidden treasures that would only be revealed by Torah-scholars in the future. In reality, however, it is impossible to reveal any chiddush before its proper time has arrived; hence, Moshe was not permitted reveal them. As the Chida writes in Dvash L'Fee: **“האחרונים יכולים לחדש מה שלא יכלו לחדש הראשונים, כי עדיין לא הגיע זמן החידוש ההוא—the later sages are able to introduce original interpretations that the earlier sages were not able to introduce, because the time for that chiddush had not yet arrived.”**

### Part of the Torah Remained Stored in the Mouth of HKB”H

As a loyal servant in the presence of his master the Chasam Sofer, zy”a, I feel obliged to propose a novel idea. The Torah states that HKB”H gave us the Torah with His oral speech, as per the passuk prefacing Matan Torah (Shemos 20, 2): **“וידבר אלקים את כל הדברים האלה —G-d spoke all these words, saying.** Now, even though HKB”H does not have a body and cannot be described accurately or perceived by physical beings, nevertheless we see that the Torah took the form of letters and words in Torah she'b'chsav. Since

HKB”H is infinite and His chochmah has no limits, He restricted His incredible chochmah step by step until it took the form of letters and words. That is what is described at Matan Torah; words, so to speak, emerged from His mouth.

In this vein, we can explain the idea of the Chasam Sofer. Although HKB”H gave us all of Torah she’b’chsav and also portions of Torah she’b’al peh at Har Sinai, nevertheless portions of Torah she’b’al peh remained stored and concealed in His mouth, so to speak. Yet, by exerting effort to study the Torah orally that HKB”H did give us at Har Sinai, our efforts below trigger a reaction above, in keeping with the passuk (Tehillim 121, 5): **”ה’ צלך על יד ימיניך—Hashem is your shade at your right hand.** In other words, He will reflect our efforts by revealing to us portions of the Torah that had been stored in His mouth.

This explains magnificently why the portion of the Torah that has not yet been revealed is called **Torah she’b’al peh.** This indicates that it contains the portions of the Torah that until now remained in the mouth—the “peh”—of HKB”H, so to speak. As explained, we can only access it by diligent, arduous study of Torah she’b’al peh—the Oral Law. We express this fact in the blessings of the Torah, we recite every morning: **”והערב נא ה’ אלקינו את דברי תורתך בפינו ובפיות עמך בית ישראל—please, Hashem, our G-d, sweeten the words of Your Torah in our mouths and in the mouths of Your people Yisrael.** For, only by indulging in the study of Torah with our mouths are we able to elicit a corresponding action from HKB”H—releasing and revealing to us the Torah that He kept stored in His mouth.

This illuminates for us the profound elucidation of Chazal on the passuk: **”כי ה’ יתן חכמה מפיו דעת ותבונה, גדולה החכמה, וגדולה ממנה הדעת ותבונה, הוי כי ה’ יתן חכמה, אבל למי שהוא אוהב, מפיו דעת ותבונה.”** **“Chochmah”** is the foundation and root of the entire Torah; it is the Written Law that was given to us at Har Sinai. All of its secrets and deeper meanings are contained in its letters, words, and the tips and crowns that adorn the letters. In the words of the Gemara (Ta’anis 9a): **”מי איכא מידי דלא רמיזי—באורייתא—is there anything that is not alluded to in the Torah?!**

In contrast, **”הדעת ותבונה”—the intelligence and understanding**—encompass all the knowledge and understanding gleaned exclusively from Torah she’b’al peh. As such, they surpass chochmah (even though “chochmah” is a higher sefirah than “binah” or “da’as”), since the purpose of the giving of the Torah is for Yisrael to access that knowledge. So, even though a large portion of knowledge and understanding remains stored and concealed in the mouth of HKB”H, it is our goal and desire to reveal it. We find a wonderful expression of this fact in the Zohar hakadosh (Mishpatim 123a): **”דעת גניז בפומא דמלכא—knowledge (of Torah she’b’al peh) is stored in the mouth of the King.**

We can now better appreciate the parable presented in the Midrash: **”To what is this comparable? To a king who had a young son. When his son returned from school, he found a large platter of food in front of his father. The father took a piece of food from the platter and gave it to him. What did his son do? He said, “I only want from that which is in your mouth.” What did he (the king) do? He gave it to him. Why? Because he loved him (his son) so much, he gave him from that which was in his mouth.** Similarly, it is thus that **“Hashem grants wisdom.” But to everyone that He loves more, He gives “from his mouth intelligence and understanding.”**

In keeping with our current discussion, here is the explanation: HKB”H gave us the chochmah at Har Sinai—namely, the Torah she’b’chsav and the portions of Torah she’b’al peh necessary to perform all of the mitzvos properly. Since, however, a large portion of the Torah remained stored in the mouth of HKB”H, we request perforce what the son in the parable requested of his father: **“I only want from that which is in your mouth.”** We want to reveal the portions of the Torah that remained concealed in the mouth of HKB”H. In the eloquent words of Shlomo HaMelech (Shir HaShirim 1, 2): **”ישקני מגשיקות פיהו כי טובים דודיך מיין”—may He kiss me with the kisses of His mouth (may He communicate His innermost wisdom to me), for Your love is dearer to me that all earthly delights.** May we be privileged to receive the tasty wine of Torah from the mouth of HKB”H!

## HKB”H Sits and Studies with a Talmid Chacham

Based on what we have learned, we can begin to comprehend a fascinating statement in the Tanna D’Vei Eliyahu Rabbah (Chapter 18) expounding on the passuk (Eichah 2, 19): “שפכי כמים לבך נוכח פני ה', מכאן אמרו כל תלמיד חכם שיושב וקורא ושונה ועוסק בתורה, הקב"ה יושב כנגדו וקורא וישנה עמו.” **“Pour out your heart like water before Hashem”**: From here, they said that every **“talmid-chacham”** who sits, reads, reviews, and studies Torah, **HKB”H sits opposite him and reads and learns with him.** Let us explain. When a Jew studies Torah orally, with his mouth, he prompts HKB”H to sit opposite him and study Torah with him to reveal portions of the Torah that are still stored and concealed in His mouth. This is similar to what occurred with Moshe Rabeinu. As HKB”H attests (Bamidbar 12, 8): **“פה אל פה אדבר בו”**—**mouth to mouth do I speak to him.**

This provides us with an intriguing insight concerning the revelation of Matan Torah. The words Hashem spoke at Har Sinai are described as (Devarim 5, 19): **“קול גדול ולא יסף”**—**a powerful voice that was never-ending.** Rashi interprets this as the Targum does: **“קל רב ולא פסק”**—**a powerful voice that never ceases.** It continues and can be heard until this very day. The voice of HKB”H emanating from His mouth, so to speak, has a tremendous impact and positive influence on all of creation, as expressed by the passuk (Tehillim 33, 6): **“בדבר ה' שמים נעשו”**—**with the word of Hashem the heavens were made.** Along these lines, we are taught in the Mishnah (Avos 5, 1): **“בעשרה מאמרות נברא העולם”**—**the world was created by means of ten utterances.** Thus, it is evident that when HKB”H speaks words of Torah, He provides us with novel, deeper understandings of the Torah.

Now, since the Torah is infinite, it is elucidated as necessary by Torah-scholars in every generation. Hence, HKB”H continues to transmit this Torah that He gave us orally—with His mouth. For, His speech delivers to us an abundance of new revelations, insights and understandings of the Torah emanating from the supreme chochmah, the root of the Torah, which is formed by the “da’as u’tevunah” in His

mouth, in keeping with the passuk: **“כי ה' יתן חכמה, מפיו דעת ותבונה”**.

## י'ש ש'שים ר'בוא א'ותיות ל'תורה Is an Acronym for יש'ש'שים ר'בוא א'ותיות ל'תורה There Are 600,000 Letters in the Torah

Following this sublime path, we will proceed to clarify the response of HKB”H to the nations of the world who protested: **“Why are they more deserving than the other nations?”** HKB”H silenced them. He said to them, **“Bring me your genealogical record.”** We will rely on a notion from the Zohar Chadash that there are 600,000 letters in the Torah corresponding to the 600,000 roots of Jewish neshamos. Each neshamah aligns with its own specific letter in the Torah. The Megaleh Amukos on Vaeschanan (186) writes that this phenomenon is alluded to by the name **ישראל**, which is an acronym for **י'ש ש'שים ר'בוא א'ותיות ל'תורה**—**there are 600,000 letters in the Torah.** In other words, every Jew is associated with a letter in the Torah.

The Ma’or Einayim (Chukas) goes one step further by suggesting an incredible chiddush: In the mouth of every Jew is the letter that is the root of his neshamah. Here is a summary of what he writes:

**It is known that there are 600,000 letters in the Torah; correspondingly, there are 600,000 roots of neshamos . . . Every Jew has his own letter in the Torah; the Torah and HKB”H are one; and it is the divine element within a person. It is truly the same letter from which the root of his neshamah stems. The letter imparts to the person the bounty and vitality of kedushah. It is imperative to recognize that the letter is located in a person’s mouth; and every letter encompasses the entire Torah. Thus, the entire Torah is in a Jew’s mouth. After all, a sefer-Torah that is missing a single letter is invalid and is not considered a Torah for this reason. Every letter is vital to a Torah when they all join together.**

This illuminates for us the enigmatic words of the sages: **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** (literally: "shut their mouths"). The sages specifically used the phrase: **"He shut their mouths"**—to teach us that the mouths of the goyim are shut, since they do not contain any letters of the Torah. Every Jew, on the other hand, has a letter of the Torah in his mouth which sustains him and invigorates him.

We can now interpret the continuation of the Midrash: **He said to them: "Bring Me your genealogical record like My children bring."** In other words, the sefer Torah itself, which contains 600,000 letters, is the **"genealogical record"**—**"sefer yuchsin"**—of the Jewish people. For, the 600,000 Jewish neshamos are nourished by the 600,000 letters of the Torah. This proves conclusively that the Jewish people are the children of the Almighty. After all, HKB"H, the Torah, and Yisrael are one. Since they are His children, they are entitled to request of HKB"H (like the son of the king in the parable): **"איני מבקש אלא מזה שבתוך פיך"**—to reveal to them Torah she'b'al peh.

In stark contrast, the nations of the world are not the children of the Almighty; they were not created by means of the letters of the Torah. Unlike a Jew,

they do not have a letter of the Torah in their mouths. This explains why they were not willing to accept the Torah; they have no connection with the Torah. Therefore, even if they had accepted the Torah, they would have only received the overt portion of it; they would not have deserved to receive the portion of the Torah stored in the mouth of HKB"H. Therefore, Rabbi Yochanan declared: **לא כרת הקב"ה ברית עם ישראל אלא בשביל דברים שבעל פה—HKB"H only entered into a covenant with Yisrael on account of the Oral Law**—referring to the portions of the Torah that remained concealed in the mouth of HKB"H and are revealed daily through laborious, dedicated Torah-study.

This teaches us what our focus should be on Chag HaShavuos. We must renew our commitment to rigorous, diligent Torah-study, so that we will be granted an abundance of new Torah-related chiddushim in the year to come. This is the significance of Rosh HaShanah for the "fruits of the tree." In this merit, we will deserve the arrival of the complete, final geulah at which time HKB"H will reveal all the portions of the Torah that we were unable to attain in Olam HaZeh—swiftly in our times! Amen.



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