



Parshat Bamidbar 5 Sivan, 5776/June 11, 2016 Vol. 7 Num. 37

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**Counting Your Name Among Israel Rabbi David Ely Grundland**

One of the great temptations people face is their desire for recognition and importance. To this end many connect themselves to symbols of celebrity while others subject themselves to potential ridicule, all to achieve the proverbial “fifteen minutes” in the spotlight. However, the Talmud notes that those who chase honour will never achieve it, while those who flee from it will be honoured. (Eruvin 13b) The nation of Israel, having come out of Egypt and received the Torah, may have been particularly susceptible to this character flaw. That generation was undeniably great – they had experienced Hashem’s strength firsthand, and achieved the highest levels of revelation and prophecy. However, they were also the generation that made some of the gravest errors in judgment, from the Golden Calf to the sin of the spies. How could a generation so profoundly aware of Hashem’s presence fall so far?

Rabbi Shalom Noach Berezofsky (Netivot Shalom Bamidbar) notes that the census in the beginning of the book of Bamidbar is introduced with the command, “Count the heads of all the tribes of Israel, by their families, the houses of their fathers, by their names.” (Bamidbar 1:2) In contrast, the census taken at the end of the book of Bamidbar, in Parshat Pinchas (Bamidbar 26:2), uses the words “by their fathers’ houses, all who go fight for Israel.”

The Netivot Shalom points out that the first generation, numbered with their names, does not enter the Land of Israel, while the one that was counted by their heritage and commitment to fight for the national cause does. He contends that the generation that died in the desert emphasized their importance and greatness; they had emerged from Egypt, stood at Sinai, and constructed the Mishkan. In contrast, the second generation was not as great, and was also less wrapped up in their own prominence. According to the Netivot Shalom, they recognized that they were small parts in a much bigger story – the story of the Jewish nation. They acted with modesty, playing down the importance of their individual lives. It was they who merited establishing our national home in Israel.

The Netivot Shalom’s emphasis of humility, and its corollary of modesty, is also developed in a midrash on our parshah. (Bamidbar Rabbah 1:3) This midrash states that until this point in the Torah, Hashem always spoke in public places, from the burning bush, to the land of Egypt, and then at Sinai. Now that Hashem saw the erected Mishkan, He said, “How lovely is modesty,” as Michah 6:8 instructs, “Walk modestly with your G-d.” From then on, Hashem only communicated through the Mishkan. Hashem chooses to communicate in a modest way, and we should walk with Him in a similar fashion.

Rabbi Moshe Isserles (Rama, Orach Chaim 1:1) enshrines the importance of modesty in Halachah. The Rama says that one should always bear Hashem’s presence in mind, and not be embarrassed, even when being denigrated by another person. He then adds, “Furthermore, one should walk modestly with Hashem.” Rabbi Yaakov Yosef of Polonye (Toldot Yaakov Yosef, Parshat Ki Tetze) connects these two statements. The Rama is conveying that when one is walking modestly with Hashem, there will be no denigration and nothing about which to feel ashamed. When one remains modest about one’s actions, whether through deep contemplative prayer, serious study, or any other action in the service of Hashem, the modesty will shield the act from any kind of ridicule at all. As we saw above, it is he who shuns self-aggrandizement who should be honoured.

We can each ask ourselves how much we need to be recognized for our actions and how much we are acting for the benefit of our nation, regardless of recognition. May we all act for the benefit of our nation, may we merit to be among those who establish our home in Israel.

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**Book: The Torah**  
**Author: G-d**  
**Publisher: Various**

**Who is the Author of the Book?**

The Torah was authored by G-d, as formulated by the Rambam in his eighth principle of faith (Introduction to Sanhedrin, Perek Chelek) – “Torah is from Heaven. This means that we believe that the entire Torah that is in our hands today... is entirely from the Powerful One.” Moshe Rabbeinu, the Rambam explains, was merely a scribe, writing down the words as they were transmitted to him, adding nothing of his own.

**When was it Authored?**

Interestingly, a midrash argues that the Torah was created even before the world was created (Pesachim 45a). This seems to mean that instead of looking at the Torah as a reflection of something that happened or should happen in this world, we ought to look at our world as a mere reflection of the eternal truth embodied in the Torah.

**The Goal of the Book**

The Rambam explains that the answer to this question marks the difference between Divine law and all other laws. Other laws are geared toward achieving

peace, justice and social order, but the Divine law aims, above all, to improve the spiritual standing of its followers.

*We have seen three elements which define the Divinity of the Torah – its origin, its embodiment of ultimate truth, and its rarified goals which transcend the physical world. We now turn our attention to a second perspective: the ways in which human beings engage the Torah.*

**To Whom was the Torah Revealed?**

The written Torah, as noted above, was transmitted in its complete form to Moshe Rabbeinu. However, our sages have informed us that another Torah was given at Mount Sinai: not only the written Torah, but also the oral one. The latter consists of interpretations, expansions, and additions to the first. (Rambam, Introduction to Commentary on the Mishnah) Moreover, the sages taught that the oral Torah can be revealed to others beyond Moshe, if they immerse themselves in Torah study. Thus, the Talmud says that Moshe Rabbeinu himself could not understand a novelty in the oral Torah spoken by Rabbi Akiva. (Menachot 29b)

**When was the Torah Given?**

The sages have disagreed regarding the exact timing of the giving of the entire Torah. According to some, G-d dictated it to Moshe Rabbeinu one scroll at a time, following and responding to events as they happened; the separate scrolls were then combined into the one book we know today. According to another opinion, the Torah was given as one entity in Moshe’s last days, at the plains of Moav. (Gittin 60a) However, the giving of the Torah did not end there, as a heavenly voice proclaims the commandments at Mount Sinai, daily – for he who is open to hearing them. (See Rashi on Devarim 5:19.)

**What is our Goal in Studying Torah?**

The Sages have debated whether our main goal should be amassing theoretical wisdom or rendering practical conclusions. (Kiddushin 40b) Either way, it is clear that listening to the teaching of the Torah is the path to hearing G-d’s voice, and uttering new words of Torah is our best method to join G-d as a partner in His creation.

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**613 Mitzvot: 91, 449: Are Bikkurim a Korban?**

**Rabbi Mordechai Torczyner**

Twice in the book of Shemot (23:19 and 34:26), as well as in Devarim 26:2, the Torah tells the Jews to bring the first of the produce of their land to the Beit haMikdash. This is the mitzvah of *bikkurim* (“firsts”); when we have a Beit haMikdash, Israeli farmers bring the first wheat, barley, grapes, figs, pomegranates, olives and dates to the Beit haMikdash. Those who live closer bring fresh fruit; those who live farther away may dry them first. *Sefer haChinuch* lists this as the Torah’s 91<sup>st</sup> mitzvah.

Ideally, the season’s *bikkurim* are first brought on Shavuot. [One may dedicate them even earlier; Minchat Chinuch 11:3 discusses *bikkurim* that are chametz on Pesach!] The residents of Jerusalem greet parades of marchers, who bring their produce into the city in beautifully decorated baskets.

When the farmers bring their produce to the Beit haMikdash, they recite biblical verses (Devarim 26:5-10) summarizing Jewish history. The same passage appears, with amplification, in the Haggadah; according to some, the farmers include the Haggadah’s additional material in their recitation. (Tzitz Eliezer 17:24) The *bikkurim* are then given to the kohanim, who eat them in Jerusalem.

*Bikkurim* seem to have a hybrid identity. On one hand, Vayikra 2:12 calls them a “korban”, and they are brought to the Beit haMikdash like other korbanot. On the other hand, they resemble a gift for the kohanim; no part of the *bikkurim* is “given to G-d” in any way, and their separation is part of the required order of non-korban tithing (see Mechilta Shemot 22:28 and Mishnah Terumot 3:6-7). The *bikkurim*

resemble the gifts of *terumah* and *maaser*. Further, the rituals of the *bikkurim* are unlike those of a korban; no part of the *bikkurim* is placed on the altar or on any fire.

In truth, the farmer does bring a traditional *korban shelamim* (celebration offering) alongside the *bikkurim*; we see this obligation in the Torah’s instruction to “rejoice before G-d” when bringing the *bikkurim*. (Sifri Reeh 64; Mishnah Bikkurim 2:4) However, Vayikra 12:2 identifies the produce itself as a korban; how are we to understand this? Where is the gift to G-d? (See, too, Rikanti to Devarim 26:2.)

Perhaps the gift aspect of the *bikkurim* is actually the farmer’s declaration, recounting Jewish history and thanking G-d for the land and its bounty. This recognition of Divine benevolence and expression of gratitude is itself the greatest korban that the farmer can bring before G-d; at the height of his pride and personal accomplishment, the farmer acknowledges that his ingredients and his success were provided by Heaven.

So it is that the Torah prohibits the kohen from consuming the *bikkurim* before the farmer places the *bikkurim* in the Beit haMikdash and recites the formal declaration; this law is codified by *Sefer haChinuch* as the Torah’s 449<sup>th</sup> mitzvah, based on Devarim 12:17. Just as one may not benefit from a traditional korban before its service is performed, so one may not benefit from the *bikkurim* before its korban rituals are complete.

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## Biography

### Rabbi S. R. Hirsch

Rabbi Mordechai Torczyner

Adapted from a column  
by R' Ezra Goldschmiedt

Rabbi Samson Raphael Hirsch was born in Hamburg in 1808, to a family that valued Torah study. He learned under Chacham Isaac Bernays and Rabbi Yaakov Tzvi Ettlinger, who were among Germany's leading rabbis, and he attended University of Bonn. Rabbi Hirsch began a rabbinic career in 1830 as Chief Rabbi of Oldenburg, a district in Germany. The limited workload of serving Oldenburg's sparsely populated Jewish communities allowed Rabbi Hirsch time for scholarship.

From an early age, Rabbi Hirsch felt driven to publish Torah which would combat the influence of the secular Enlightenment on the Jewish community of his post-Napoleonic day. As he put it, "I see a child enveloped in flames. The bystanders are afraid; they do nothing, or else they are only trying to save the building. I see the child. I rush in... 'But,' you might ask, 'what if you are too late? What if the building collapses on top of the child in a roaring conflagration before you reach it?' To this I reply: 'Were I to be buried under it, I would at least have done my duty.'" (Nineteen Letters)

Rabbi Hirsch's first written effort to fulfill this duty was *Horeb*, but its publication was delayed until 1838 due to the publisher's doubt that a market existed. *Horeb* attempted to explain the mitzvot to modern ears. Rabbi Hirsch wished to publish a prequel, detailing the Torah's philosophy of G-d, Man, the Jewish nation, and the Divine goals for human history, but he never actually wrote it.

In 1835, Rabbi Hirsch published *Igrot Tzafun* ("The Nineteen Letters"), anonymously. The work was a fictional correspondence between Benjamin, a Jew assimilating in the midst of German Emancipation, and Naftali, a childhood friend now-turned Orthodox rabbi. Naftali set forth a grand vision of how Judaism should be lived, and explained how it would differ from the Reform system, as well as the established Orthodoxy of his time.

Rabbi Hirsch went on from Oldenburg to serve several other communities, most famously Frankfurt-am-Main. He was also a great halachic authority. One of his daughters burned most of his responsa after his death in 1888, thinking this was her father's wish. The surviving rulings can be found in *Shemesh Marpei*.

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## Torah and Translation

### Do We Celebrate the Wrong Day?

Rabbi S. R. Hirsch to Vayikra 23:21

Translated from the Hebrew by Rabbi Mordechai Torczyner

לא יום ההתגלות שבסיני, אלא יום סיום של הספירה שלקראתו - הוא שנתעלה ליום חג; שהרי זו השיטה שנתקבלה באומה: חג השבועות חל להיות ביום שלפני מתן תורה; ותורה לא ניתנה ביום החמשים, אלא ביום החמשים ואחד.

ולמדנו מכאן אמת גדולה. חג מתן תורה איננו מתייחס לעובדה של נתינת התורה; אלא הוא חוגג את הכנת עצמנו להיות ראויים לקבלת תורה. היום שלפני מתן תורה, היום האחרון להגבלה ולפרישה - הוא המיוצג על ידי יום החמשים לספירת העומר; הוא היום, שבו ישראל היו מוכנים לייעודם הגדול - לקבל ולשאת את התורה.

הן כבר הערנו במקום אחר: משונה חג השבועות משאר כל החגים; שהרי אין הוא קרוי על שם המצוות הנוהגות בו; אלא הוא קרוי "שבועות" - על שם הספירה שהכנינה לקראתו. וגם עיקר מתן תורה לא היה כלל באותו יום - סיני. שהרי תורה ניתנה ונתקבלה במשך ארבעים שנה; ועשרת הדיברות שנשמעו מסיני אינם יתירים בקדושתם ובמעלתם האלוהית מכל מצוה אחרת של תרי"ג מצוות, שניתנה לנו מפי ה' ביד משה.

והקב"ה בעצמו הסביר את משמעות יום סיני: אין הוא אלא הקדמה לתורה, שתימסר בידי משה; הוא בא לאמת לישראל, שה' יכול לדבר אל האדם, ואכן דיבר אל משה; עובדה זו נודעה לנו מניסיון עצמנו, והרי היא לנו וודאות; ומכאן ואילך נקבל באימון את דברי משה המוסר לנו תורה מפי ה'. "הנה אנכי בא אליך בעב הענן בעבור ישמע העם בדברי עמך וגם - בך יאמינו לעולם" (שמות יט, ט).

ולפיכך לא נתקבלו עשרת הדיברות בתפילת הציבור - "מפני תרעומת המינין" (ברכות יב ע"א): לבל יעלה על הדעת, שעשרת הדיברות הם כל התורה כולה - או שהם יתירים בקדושתם ובמעלתם האלהית. וכעין זה יש לומר גם ביחס לחג השבועות: דווקא יום ההתגלות של עשרת הדיברות לא נתקדש לחג

to us from our own experience, and it was a certainty for us. From then on, we would faithfully accept the words of Moshe, conveying to us Torah from the mouth of G-d. "Behold, I come to you in the thick of the cloud, so that the nation will hear when I speak with you, and they will also trust in you forever." (Exodus 19:9)

And this is why the Ten Commandments were not accepted into communal prayer, "because of the charges of heretics." (Berachot 12a) Lest anyone think that the Ten Commandments are the entirety of Torah, or are greater in their holiness and Divine character. One may say similarly regarding the festival of Shavuot: The specific day of revelation of the Ten Commandments was not sanctified as a national festival.

[Preface: According to Rabbi Yosi (Shabbat 86b-87b), the Torah was given on the 7<sup>th</sup> of Sivan. However, we observe Shavuot on the 6<sup>th</sup> of Sivan, the 50<sup>th</sup> day of the Omer.]

It is not the day of the Revelation at Sinai, but the day of the conclusion of the preceding count, that is elevated as the day of the festival. This is the view that has been accepted among the nation: the festival of Shavuot takes place on the day before the presentation of the Torah; the Torah was given not on the fiftieth day, but on the fifty-first day.

From this we learn a great truth. The festival of the presentation of the Torah is not associated with the event of the presentation of the Torah; rather, it celebrates our preparation, becoming worthy of receiving the Torah. The day before the presentation of the Torah, the last day of boundaries and separation, is the day represented by the fiftieth day of the counting of the Omer. This is the day when Israel was ready for its great destiny: to receive and carry the Torah.

We have already noted elsewhere that the festival of Shavuot is different from all other festivals, for it is not named by the mitzvot which take place on that day. Rather, it is named "Shavuot" for the count which prepares for it. And the actual presentation of the Torah was not on that day at all, at Sinai. Torah was given and accepted throughout the forty years, and the Ten Commandments heard from Sinai are no greater in their holiness and Divine character than any other commandment among the 613 commandments, given to us from G-d's mouth, through Moshe's hand.

G-d personally explained the significance of the day at Sinai: It is only preparation for Torah, which would be given [later] by Moshe's hand. The purpose was to verify for Israel that G-d could speak to Man, and that He did speak to Moshe. This reality was known

## This Week in Israeli History: Special Shavuot Edition

Rabbi Jonathan Ziring

### The Presentation of the Torah

6 Sivan is Sunday / 7 Sivan is Monday

Perhaps the most important event in Jewish history is the giving of the Torah at Sinai. Although Jewish communal life is centred in the Land of Israel, Rabbi Chaim ibn Attar (Ohr HaChaim) argues that the Torah had to be given outside of Israel in order to emphasize that the Jews only deserved a land because they accepted the Torah first.

While the sixth of Sivan, on which we observe the first day of Shavuot, is commonly identified as the day the Jews received the Torah, and our liturgy even refers to Shavuot as such, this identification is far from obvious. The Torah (Shemot 19) is ambiguous regarding the date when the Torah was given, and the sages of the Talmud (Shabbat 86b) debate whether the Torah was given on the sixth or seventh

of Sivan, and seems to conclude that it was given on the seventh. Thus, while in the Diaspora that day is part of Shavuot, in Israel it is not. Furthermore, before the fixed calendar was established Shavuot could have been celebrated on the fifth or seventh of Sivan. To add to the enigma, the Torah never refers to Shavuot as the holiday of the presentation of the Torah, instead referring to the commandments and sacrifices related to it.

Thus, while we popularly identify the sixth of Sivan as the day G-d gave the Torah, it behooves us to think about why the Torah never revealed the date of this momentous occasion, why the Torah never connects this event to Shavuot, and why Shavuot need not fall on the day of that event.

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## Weekly Highlights: June 11 – June 17 / 5 Sivan - 11 Sivan

Time	Speaker	Topic	Location	Special Notes
<b>SHABBAT AND SHAVUOT—JUNE 11-13</b>				
<b>SHABBAT JUNE 11</b>				
7:20 PM	R' Jonathan Ziring, Daf Yomi, BAYT			
	After minchah, R' Yisroel M. Rosenzweig It is not in Heaven! Or Chaim Minyan			
<b>FIRST DAY OF SHAVUOT, JUNE 11-12</b>				
11:00 PM	R' David Ely Grundland Hearing the Voice at Sinai, Beth Lida			
12:00 AM	R' Mordechai Torczyner, for women Torat Iyov: Iyov or Shir haShirim? 49 Michael Ct.			
1:00 AM	R' Yisroel Meir Rosenzweig Resurrection and Personal Identity, Clanton Park			
1:00 AM	R' Mordechai Torczyner Torat Iyov: When Evil Wins, BAYT			
1:30 AM	R' David Ely Grundland Hearing the Voice at Sinai, Village Shul			
2:00 AM	R' Jonathan Ziring Shavuot Night Live: Funny Torah? Aish Thornhill			
2:00 AM	R' Yisroel Meir Rosenzweig, for teens Are you sure it's 613? Clanton Park			
2:10 AM	R' Mordechai Torczyner Torat Iyov: The Value of Empathy, Zichron Yisroel			
3:00 AM	R' Jonathan Ziring Torah Study: Closing the Book, BAYT			
3:00 AM	R' Mordechai Torczyner Torat Iyov: When Friends Disbelieve, Bnei Akiva			
3:30 AM	R' David Ely Grundland Deadpool and Prayer, Shaarei Shomayim			
4:00 AM	R' Mordechai Torczyner Torat Iyov: Was Job Jewish? Ayin l'Tzion			
7:25 PM	R' Mordechai Torczyner Rav Kook: From Matzah to Chametz, BAYT			
8:00 PM	R' Jonathan Ziring Shavuot Night Live: Funny Torah? Bnai Torah			
<b>SECOND DAY OF SHAVUOT, JUNE 12-13</b>				
7:30 PM	Rabbi Jonathan Ziring, Daf Yomi, BAYT			
8:00 PM	R' Mordechai Torczyner Torat Iyov: When Evil Wins, Bnai Torah			
<b>Tue. June 14</b>				
9:30 AM	R' David Ely Grundland	Chabura: Utensils	Yeshivat Or Chaim	<b>University Chaverim</b>
10:00 AM	Mrs. Ora Ziring	Women's Beit Midrash	Ulpanat Orot	
1:30 PM	R' Mordechai Torczyner	Iyov: The Siyum!	Shaarei Shomayim	
<b>Wed. June 15</b>				
2:30 PM	R' Jonathan Ziring	Narratives of the Exodus	Location: Contact carollesser@rogers.com	<b>For women</b>
8:00 PM	R' Yisroel M. Rosenzweig	CCTV and Yichud	Shaarei Tefillah	
<b>Thu. June 16</b>				
1:30 PM	R' Mordechai Torczyner	Shoftim: Devorah Begins	49 Michael Ct.	<b>For women</b>