

Shavuos 2013

1.

Nachalas Tzvi page 307

The Chasam Sofer asks, **why is it that regarding yitzias Mitzrayim (leaving Egypt) where we went from being slaves to being free do we have a holiday, Pesach. However, regarding receiving the Torah which is our life in this world and in the next, we don't have a holiday?** (Contrary to common opinion and misconception, Shavuos is not an official holiday that was enacted in order to remember receiving the Torah. The Torah just said Shevuos is a zman (time) that we received the Torah.)

Yitzias Mitzrayim was a new concept, occurrence and event that never existed before. Therefore, Hashem instructed us to celebrate Pesach in order that we will remember this new event that occurred. Dissimilarly, the Torah wasn't a new thing that happened. The Torah is above, and preceded the concept of, time. The Zohar Hakadosh (parshas Teruma 161b) says Hashem looked into the Torah and created the world (יסתכל באורייתא וברא עלמא). Therefore Hashem didn't instruct us to celebrate this Yom tov, because of the fact that the Torah preceded and is above time.

An additional answer is as follows; yitzias Mitzrayim could have been forgotten if Chazal didn't enact Pesach. However, since the Torah is our life there is never a moment that a person doesn't have an obligation to fulfill the Torah. We are constantly remembering the Torah. Therefore a holiday didn't need to be enacted because it will never be forgotten.

This shtims (coincides) with Tosefes in Berachos (11b). What's the difference between Sukkah and Torah? **Why are we obligated to recite a new beracha after we leave the Sukkah and then return and we want to start a new meal, whereas regarding Torah even if we had a large break between learning we don't recite a new beracha? Tosefos answers because we never give up, separate and divert our mind from the Torah.** Every second a person is obligated to learn as stated in Yehoshua "you shall contemplate the Torah day and night." (1, 8) "והגית בו יומם ולילה". **Therefore regarding learning it's as if we are learning the entire day without interruption.** This can be comparable to sitting in a Sukkah the entire day without interruption where the recitation of one beracha made in the beginning of the day would be sufficient and cover the rest of the day. **An unwilling interruption isn't considered an interruption. Conversely, regarding Sukkah, once we finish eating, we are done with the Sukkah. Therefore when we return later to eat another meal, the beracha recited at the earlier meal will not cover this new meal.** (יש לומר דשאני תורה שאינו מייאש דעתו דכל שעה אדם) (מחוייב ללמוד דכתיב "והגית בו יומם ולילה" והוי כמו יושב כל היום בלא הפסק, אבל אכילה בסוכה יש שעה קבועה.)

2.

Connection between safer Bamidbar and Shevuos

Nachalas Tzvi page 330

What does parshas Bamidbar have to do with Bechukosai? Additionally, what is the connection between safer Vayikra and Bamidbar? Lastly, why do we generally lain (read) Bamidbar before Shavuos? The Gemara in Eruvin (54a) states that the Torah only endures within someone who makes himself like a desert. The pasuk at the end of safer Vayikra says these are the Mitzvos Hashem commanded Moshe. The pasuk at the beginning of safer Bamidbar states Hashem spoke to Moshe in the midbar (desert). This is alluding to the reason why Moshe merited receiving and transferring the Torah; because he made himself like a midbar. **Therefore we lain safer Bamidbar before Shavuos in order to refer to this principle of making ourselves like a midbar in order that we can receive the Torah.**

What does the aforementioned Gemara mean when it says that the Torah only endures within someone who makes himself like a desert? **This could be referring to being humble** as stated in Eruvin 54a (Also Bamidbar Raba parsha 1 os 7). The first Mishna in Avos says Moshe received the Torah from Sinai. Why does it say Moshe received the Torah from Sinai and not from Hashem? This is to teach us that Moshe received the lesson about being humble from Sinai in order that he could receive the Torah.

A similar explanation is offered by the Eitz Yosef (commentary on Medrash Tanchuma os vav dibbur hamaschil hefker). **One needs to be humble in order that he will learn from anyone. Similarly, one needs to be humble and willing to teach anyone.**

Another explanation as to why the Torah only endures within someone who makes himself like a desert is; a midbar is ownerless just like the Torah. Whoever wants the Torah can come and learn and acquire Torah for himself. (Yuma (72b), also Rambam hilchos Talmud Torah perek gimal)

Another explanation of why the Torah only endures within someone who makes himself like a desert is based on the Mishna in Avos (fourth perek) that says you should exile yourself to a place of Torah. (רבי נהוראי אומר הוי גולה למקום תורה ואל תאמר שהיא תבוא אחריד . (שחביריד יקיימה בידך . **Get away from the distractions and go to a place of Torah to learn.**

Another explanation as to why the Torah only endures within someone who makes himself like a desert is suggested by Rashi (Sotah 21b). **Deserts symbolize simplicity. One shouldn't be concerned with physicality's.** This explanation is also offered by the Darchei Musser pages 179-180. The Torah only endures within someone who makes himself like a desert means someone who isn't materialistic, someone who is capable of surviving with bare necessities. The generation of the desert is a quintessential example of this; they survived on mann alone. This is stated explicitly in Avos (perek six)-eat bread with salt, sleep on the ground. Someone who learns properly will be taken care of. Hashem Himself will help this individual. Just as those in the desert were divinely helped from the mann that descended from the sky, so too those who toil in Torah will be miraculously helped. To elaborate on this concept let's relate a parable. A son went to school and during lunch time realized that he forgot his lunch at home. He then called his father who subsequently brought his lunch to school. So too explains the Chafetz Chaim someone who learns with all of their strength will be taken care of. Our father, Hashem will take care of those who toil in Torah. When one makes himself like a desert Hashem will take care of his necessities. (Measure for measure (mida keneged mida), since this individual is unconcerned with physicality's, therefore Hashem will take care of his physicality's.)

The question arises, why wasn't the Torah given in a large Beis Medrash? Why did Hashem give us the Torah in a desert? A desert where there are sand storms and other uncondusive factors

doesn't seem like the optimal setting to give or receive the Torah! Why wasn't the Torah given in a more conducive environment? Based on the aforementioned information we can explain that **the Torah was specifically given in the desert in order to teach the fact that learning can be done anywhere, even in a desert! We are able to learn, even in an uncondusive environment!** The Gemara in Taanis (21b) quotes a statement of Rav Yosi who says 'the place of a person doesn't give him honor, rather a person brings honor to his place.' (רבי יוסי אומר לא (מקומו של אדם מכבדו אלא אדם מכבד את מקומו). We can bring Torah wherever we are. We can become great in learning regardless of our situation.

This shtims (coincides) with that which we discussed in parshas Teruma. "Make for me a Mikdash and my presence will dwell within it (בתוכם)." (25, 8) "ועשו לי מקדש ושכנתי בתוכם." Many meforshim (commentators) are bothered by the plurality of the word within it (בתוכם)? The pasuk should be in the singular tense, since there is only one Mikdash? The Or Hachaim Hakadosh explains that the place that an individual sanctifies as a holy place for the presence of Hashem has to be amongst the Jews. The Elshach Hakadosh similarly explains that **the pasuk isn't merely referring to a physical Mikdash; rather, every person must create and make an individual Mikdash within himself. Meaning, even if we are not in a holy environment such as a Beis Medrash or shul, we must still strive to make that environment holy.** The Artscroll on safer Shmuel (alef perik gimal pasuk gimel, page 25) quotes the Avnay Nazir, who says, 'a person is truly in the place where his mind and heart are. Someone, whose thoughts are in holiness, is in a holy place even though his body is elsewhere.' Meaning that we can be in an unholy place such as waiting for a train at the train station, but if we are learning from a sefer then, then it is as if we are in a holy place. Similarly Rav Shach zasa"l (Rav Shach speaks pages 166-167) says 'in my opinion, if a Jew is immersed in Torah study, then wherever he is, it's as if he is in Israel.'

Thank you Yair Moshe Ausabel for typing this up.