

Shavuos 2014

1. Sifsei Chaim Moadim chelek gimmel pages 188-192: Chazal says (beginning of Bereishis Raba) that the Torah says 'I am the vessel of Hashem.' This is analogous to a person who builds a massive and extravagant palace. He bases the intricate details of the building on blueprints. So too explains the Zohar (Teruma page 161) Hashem looked into the Torah and created the world. (אסתכל בה באורייתא וברא עלמא) Everything that was created, came from the (blueprints of) Torah. Everything that is in the world and everything that people do is in the Torah. The main reason we need to serve Hashem is because He took us out of Egypt as the pasuk states in Shemos 20, "I am Hashem your God who took you out of Mitzrayim (Egypt)." **There are many Mitzvos that we perform in order to remember our liberation from Egypt. How can it be that if we were never in Egypt we wouldn't have had these Mitzvos? Based on the aforementioned information that the Torah preceded the world, how is it possible that there are Mitzvos that serve as a remembrance of Mitzrayim if they were in the Torah before the creation of world?**

The truth is that the exile and redemption from Mitzrayim were not the reason for the Mitzvos. The Mitzvos were the reason we were exiled and redeemed from Mitzrayim! The entire slavery was only a means to the Mitzvos we would receive when we were freed. If we would not have been exiled, we would have received these mitzvos in a different way.

Yetzias (leaving) Mitzrayim was not the only way to receive these Mitzvos. The Beis Halevi (parshas Bo dibbur hamaschil 'veaal devarav') says the Mitzvos that we know the reasons for; such as matzah, pesach, and maror, are not the main reasons for the Mitzvos. This is because the Torah preceded the mitzvah even before the world was created. Additionally, the Avos (forefathers) fulfilled the entire Torah as stated in Yuma (28) (and other Midrashim) which was before Mitzrayim. The Gemara in Nedarim (32) says the Torah is great because without it the world would not endure. The Nefesh HaChaim (shar daled, 11) says that if there were even one moment where Torah is not being learned in the entire world, all the celestial spheres would cease to exist. This is the reason for different time zones; when some people are sleeping in one location, people in a different time zone are awake and learning.

2. Yeshuas Yaakov (siman 494 end of os alef) quotes the Magan Avraham who quotes the Zohar that says **the custom is to stay awake the night of Shavuos.** The Magan Avraham writes **the reason for this is, because the Jews were sleeping and Hashem needed to wake them up to receive the Torah. To fix this we stay up all night.** The Gemara in Shabbas (88a) says Hashem covered the Jews with mountain like a barrel and forced them to accept the Torah. ("ויתיצבו") בתחית ההר" אמר רב אבדימי בר חמא בר חסא מלמד שכפה הקדוש ברוך הוא עליהם את ההר כגיגית, ואמר להם אם אתם מקבלים התורה מוטב, ואם לאו שם תהא קבורתכם. אמר רב אחא בר יעקב מכאן מודעא רבה לאורייתא. אמר Tosefos (רבא אף על פי כן, הדור קבלוה בימי אחשורוש. דכתיב "קימו וקבלו היהודים" קיימו מה שקיבלו כבר. asks, we already said Naaseh v'nishma (we will do and we will listen) (24, 7), why did Hashem need to force us to reaccept the Torah? The Medrash Tanchuma (parshas Noach os gimal) answers that we said Naaseh v'nishma regarding the Torah shebichtav (written Torah). Torah shebichtav doesn't require as much toil, pain and is much smaller than Torah she'baal peh. Conversely, **regarding Torah she'baal peh (oral Torah), we needed to be forced to accept it. Torah she'baal peh requires more self-sacrifice.** The Yeshuas Yaakov says **it is known that night time is the time to learn Torah she'baal peh.** During the day we learn Torah shebichtav. (See Orach Chaim siman 338) The Yalkut Shemoni (Ki Sisa 406) says on Har Sinai Moshe knew

when it was night based on what Hashem was teaching him. When he was learning Torah shebechtav he knew it was day and when he was learning Torah she'baal peh he knew it was night. **Since the Jews needed to be forced to accept Torah she'baal peh which is learned at night, we specifically learn Torah she'baal peh all night in order to reconnect and reattach to more Torah she'baal peh!**

3. Otzros HaTorah Shavuot page 141: Chazal says (Sanhedrim 7a, Kiddushin 40, and Shabbas 31) that when a person gets judged in heaven, he first gets judged on whether he set time to learn daily. Tosefos (in Sanhedrin 7a) asks that when a person goes to heaven they first ask him if he conducted business properly. The second question they ask is if he learned Torah. Tosefes answers that first they ask about business and then Torah, but the punishment for not learning precedes the punishment for improper business.

The question on this answer of Tosfos is, since they ask him first about business, why doesn't he get punished first regarding improper business? The Ein Yaakov (Kiddushin 40) quotes the Tana D'bei Eliyahu Zuta (14) that relates one time Eliyahu was traveling and met a man who didn't know any Torah at all. Eliyahu asked this ignoramus, what are you going to answer Hashem on the day of judgement? He said Rabbi, I have something to answer Hashem; I can say Hashem didn't give me a mind to sit and learn. Eliyahu then asked him what his profession was. He said he is a hunter. Eliyahu then said who taught you how to make the net, fish and then wait for the fish etc. The man replied for this they gave me knowledge from heaven. Eliyahu replied with a kol v'chomer. If for this easy task you were granted enough wisdom, for divrei Torah where the pasuk says the Torah is so close to you (Devarim 30, 14), surely they gave you enough wisdom. Immediately he started crying after hearing Eliyahu Hanavi's powerful and correct words. **So really the first question in heaven will be regarding learning because of the severity of bittul (nullification of) Torah. However, the question regarding business will be asked first in order to disprove any excuse a person will have, just as Eliyahu tactically did to this man. The only reason why we are first asked about business is to remove any excuse as to why a person didn't learn.**

4. Birchas Yaabetz chelek gimal pages 305-306: The Gemara in Shabbas (89b) quotes the pasuk "Avraham didn't know us and Yaakov didn't know us". The Gemara quotes Rabbi Yochanan who says in the future Hashem will say to Avraham the Jewish people sinned. Avraham will reply wipe them out because they sinned! Then Hashem will go to Yaakov and say Bnei Yisrael sinned and Yaakov offers a similar response. Hashem tells Yitzchak your children sinned and Yitzchak will reply are they my children and not Your children? You called them my children when they said naaseh v'nishma. Yitzchak says really how long can a person sin for. The first twenty years a person isn't liable. Subtract 25 years for the nighttime when he is sleeping. Take off an additional 12.5 years for davening, eating, and using the restroom. (Not a contradiction to the Gemara in Berachos (32b) that says chassidim harishonim used to daven for nine hours a day because that is only referring to chassidim!) Now with the remaining 12.5 years, half is on me and half is on You so please have mercy. The point is, Yitzchak is defending the Jews. The Tur (siman 417) writes that he heard from his brother Rabbi Yehuda who said the holidays were established corresponding to the Avos. Pesach corresponds to Avraham. Shavuot corresponds to Yitzchak because of the horn from the ayal (ram) used by Yitzchak which was blown on Shavuot. Sukkos corresponds to Yaakov.

The question is what is the connection between Yitzchak and Shavuos? The answer is, the Torah is all about mesiras nefesh (self-sacrifice) for learning Torah. It needs to be in the form/style of an akadas Yitzchak. As previously related Yitzchak represents and is the quintessential example of someone who demonstrates proper self-sacrifice. He applies self-sacrifice on an individual level and a communal level. As the Gemara quotes Reish Lakish who says the Torah only endures in a person who kills himself for it. (Berachos 63b, Shabbas 83b, Rambam hilchos talmid Torah perek gimmel). **That's specifically why Yitzchak corresponds to Shavuos!**

Thank you Yair Moshe Ausabel for typing this up.