

DATA of Plano

Parshas Bamidbar | 5 Sivan 5778 | May 19, 2018

SERMON

with Rabbi Zalon



SHAVUOS:
DANCING WITH
THE STARS

Friday

Mincha: 7:00

Candle lighting: 8:03 (Earliest time: 6:55)

Shabbos Day

Class on the book of Ruth: 8:00

Shacharis: 9:00

Latest time for shema: 9:54

Learners' Service: 10:30

Childcare: 10:45

Kiddush following services at 11:45

Father and Son Learning: 6:45

Mincha: 7:45

Candle lighting not before: 9:07

LEARNERS' SERVICE

with Rabbi Yogi



DELAYING
GRATIFICATION

From The Desk of Rabbi Yogi

WHAT OBLIGATES POST-SINAI JEWS IN TORAH?

There is a great political cartoon I saw recently entitled "Genesis of the Trial Attorney." The single-framed cartoon depicts Moses coming down the mountain with the tablets of stone in his hands. The Jewish people stand below, seemingly ready to accept the law in its fullness, when one man comes forward with confidence and opines, "OK... You say "commandments" but I hear "recommendations"..."

As Shavuot nears, and we prepare ourselves to re-accept the Torah and its laws anew, the crafty assertion

made by this fictional attorney bears great consideration, if not for those who stood at Sinai, but for all the future generations of Jews who would come from that notable generation. For even if those at Sinai accepted the Torah's laws with their celebrated cry of consent - "na'aseh v'nishma" ("we will do and then we will understand") - all future generations did not. What, then, obligates them - us - in this divine contract? After all, can a parent accept a contract that extends to their children who have no say in the matter?



Nonetheless, we know that Torah literature takes our obligation of Torah law as a given. After all, they are called the 613 mitzvot (“commandments” - not “good deeds” as the word “mitzva” is so often mistranslated)! Similarly, the Talmud is replete with the statement “kvar mushva ve’omed me’har sinai” (“[a Jew is] already sworn in at Mount Sinai”). What is, then, the halachic mechanism that binds later generations of Jews to the Sinaitic commitment of their forefathers? None other than Nachmanides (1194-1270) tackles this thorny issue. In Nachmanides’ opinion, the oath of an entire nation is fundamentally different than the oath of an individual. Whereas an individual can only obligate himself in a contract or oath, a national oath passes on to all future members of that nation.

In my mind I imagine it as similar to a treaty made between nations. For even if the presidents of the countries who negotiated a peace agreement were to die (or similarly, if the citizens that elected those officials were to die), the treaty’s binding nature would continue unabated. Why? Because the agreement itself ultimately lied between larger entities, in this case countries, and those entities are alive and well. So it is with the oath made at Sinai. The nation itself accepted the Torah and all future members of the tribe would enter into the agreement of “na’aseh v’nishma” as a result.



In honor of the coming holiday and in honor of in-depth Torah study that lies at Shavuot’s core, I’d like to offer a fresh approach to our original question based on the scholarly writings of Rabbi Yosef Dov Soloveitchik (1820-1892), known throughout the Torah world as the Beis Halevi. The Beis Halevi (Drushim, 17) was bothered with a different component of the “na’aseh v’nishma” oath. Namely, why the Jewish people’s oath was ever considered halachically valid in the first place. After all, Jewish law states that a commitment is not considered legally binding unless all of the details and requirements of that commitment are clearly specified and delineated at the time of the agreement (Shulchan Aruch - Choshen Mishpat 207:21). In the case of the Jews at Sinai, the proverbial cart most certainly came before the horse, as their national pledge proceeded the delineation of the vast majority of the commandments!? The Beis Halevi suggests an approach to this question by noting a seeming contradiction to the aforementioned law. Halacha allows a person to sell himself as a slave (the nature of the unique type of slavery that the Torah allows is beyond the scope of this article). A slave does not know exactly what kind of work he will be forced to do by his new master, nor the number of hours his work will entail. Nevertheless, such a sale is halachically valid. Why?

According to Rabbi Soloveitchik the reason is because a slave is selling himself - his body (something quantifiable). What a slave is not doing is agreeing to a series of future unknown obligatory tasks (as that would most certainly be ruled an invalid agreement).

So too, says the Beis Halevi, the Jews at Mt. Sinai were not merely agreeing to a series of yet unspoken laws (something considerably problematic in halacha). Rather, they were offering themselves, their whole selves - body and soul - to G-d as servants. And so we read, “For the children of Israel are servants to Me, they are My servants, whom I have taken out of the land of Egypt - I am Hashem your G-d” (Vayikra 25:55).*

Based on this novel interpretation of the Beis Halevi, perhaps we can suggest that the reason why all future generations are obligated in a Torah that they themselves never swore allegiance to, is because they were born to people who had given themselves to G-d as servants. And a child born of a slave is a slave himself. Human beings tend to become enslaved to something over the course of their lifetimes. For some it is the pull towards money and possessions, for others it is the accumulation of honor and acceptance by friends and society, and for yet others it is the demand for constant pleasure and entertainment - anything to distract us from the tedium of life itself.

Ashreinu! - How blessed are we to be servants of G-d Almighty! Servants to a loving Master who desires our best and rewards us fully for our good deeds. Ashreinu! - How lucky are we to be bound by laws that not only uplift, but sanctify us!

Such servitude is yet freedom by another name!

* As for Nachmanides who held that the oath of “na’aseh v’nishma” was a valid oath to begin with, I believe that he could answer the Beis Halevi’s question in the following manner: The reason why halacha invalidates commitments made without complete foreknowledge of what’s at stake is because of the estimation of Chazal (the Sages) that people do not fully accept such commitments in their hearts. While this may be true in dealings between man and man, in dealings between man and G-d, it is logical and fair to assume that the law would be different. After all, aware that G-d is a loving Father, and that whatever future acts G-d might ask from man would be in our full and best interest, it is reasonable to assume that human beings would fully accept unstipulated divine covenants. (See the Chida in Devarim Achadim, drush 5 for Shabbat Kallah p.65a for a similar approach)

LOOK WHAT'S HAPPENING AT DATA OF PLANO



YOU DON'T WANT TO MISS OUT...

SHAVUOT FUN FACTS # 2

- On Shavuot morning, we make a special effort to recite the silent Amidah prayer exactly at sunrise, the ideal time to pray according to the Talmud.
- On the first morning of Shavuot, we read the ancient Aramaic poem "Akdamus" immediately prior to the Torah reading. The poem describes the Jewish nation's intense love for the Torah.
- The revelation at Sinai was compared to a wedding, with us as the groom and the Torah as the bride.
- Instead of the traditional all-night study, many Jews have the custom to recite "Tikkun Leil Shavuot", a digest of excerpts from every single part of the Written and Oral Torah. This takes all night!



- Shavuot is the only Biblical holiday on which there is no unique mitzvah to perform (such as shofar, lulav, etc.) This is because it's a "honeymoon" between us and the Torah, and we focus on the relationship itself without "distractions".
- Ruth is one of the five Megillos that we read throughout the year. Do you know the other four?
- The first day of Shavuot is always the first day of the week as the first day of the previous Passover. Can you figure out why?

- * **Shavuot All-Night Program** | Saturday evening, May 19 @ 11:45 P.M.
- * **Krav Maga Class** | Sunday, May 27 @ 12:00 P.M.
- * **Friday Night Live** | Friday, June 1 @ 7:15 P.M.
- * **Sunday School Awards Program** | Sunday, June 3rd @ 10:00 A.M.
- * **Community End of School Year BBQ** | Sunday, June 3rd @ 12:15 P.M.
- * **Champions Camp** | August 5 - August 10

Thank you to our Shavuot Sponsors:

Refreshments for the all-night learning

Beitner family (in memory of Ezriel ben Yehuda Aryeh Leib HaLevi)

Flowers and décor

Barak family

Rabbi and Mrs. Yossi Sonnenblick

Dairy Kiddush

Merill and Sandi Berman

Further sponsorships available...



SHAVUOS SCHEDULE 5778

Motzaei Shabbos - Saturday, May 19

Mincha 7:45 P.M.

(Eat Shalosh Seudos at home before Mincha, preferably before 4:55 P.M.)

Class-Yissachar-Zevulun: What if the agreement goes wrong? 8:30 P.M.

Candle lighting **from a pre lit flame- not before** 9:07 P.M.
Say "Boruch hamavdil bein kodesh l'kodesh" before lighting

Maariv 9:07 P.M.

All Night Study 11:45 P.M.

- Gun Control with Rabbi Yogi
- Talmudic Concepts with Rabbi Zakon:
 1. Laws of Tefilah
 2. Exploring the Meaning of the Sinai Revelation based on the works of Rav Kook
 3. The Mysticism of Torah Study
- Open Study- To your heart's content!

Coffee, caffeinated drinks and refreshments will be available all night, sponsored by the Beitner family in memory of Ezriel ben Yehuda Aryeh Leib HaLevi

Sunday, May 20

Shacharis Services 5:45 A.M.

Pre-Mincha Study 7:00 P.M.

Mincha 8:00 P.M.

Class with Rabbi Sonnenblick 8:25 P.M.

Maariv 9:09 P.M.

Candle lighting **from pre lit flame only-not before** 9:09 P.M.

Monday, May 21

Shacharis	9:00 A.M.
Yizkor not before	10:35 A.M.
Dairy delight Kiddush following services	
Pre Mincha Study	6:30 P.M.
Mincha	7:30 P.M.
Neilas Hachag - End of Shavuos celebration	8:00 P.M.
Maariv	9:09 P.M.

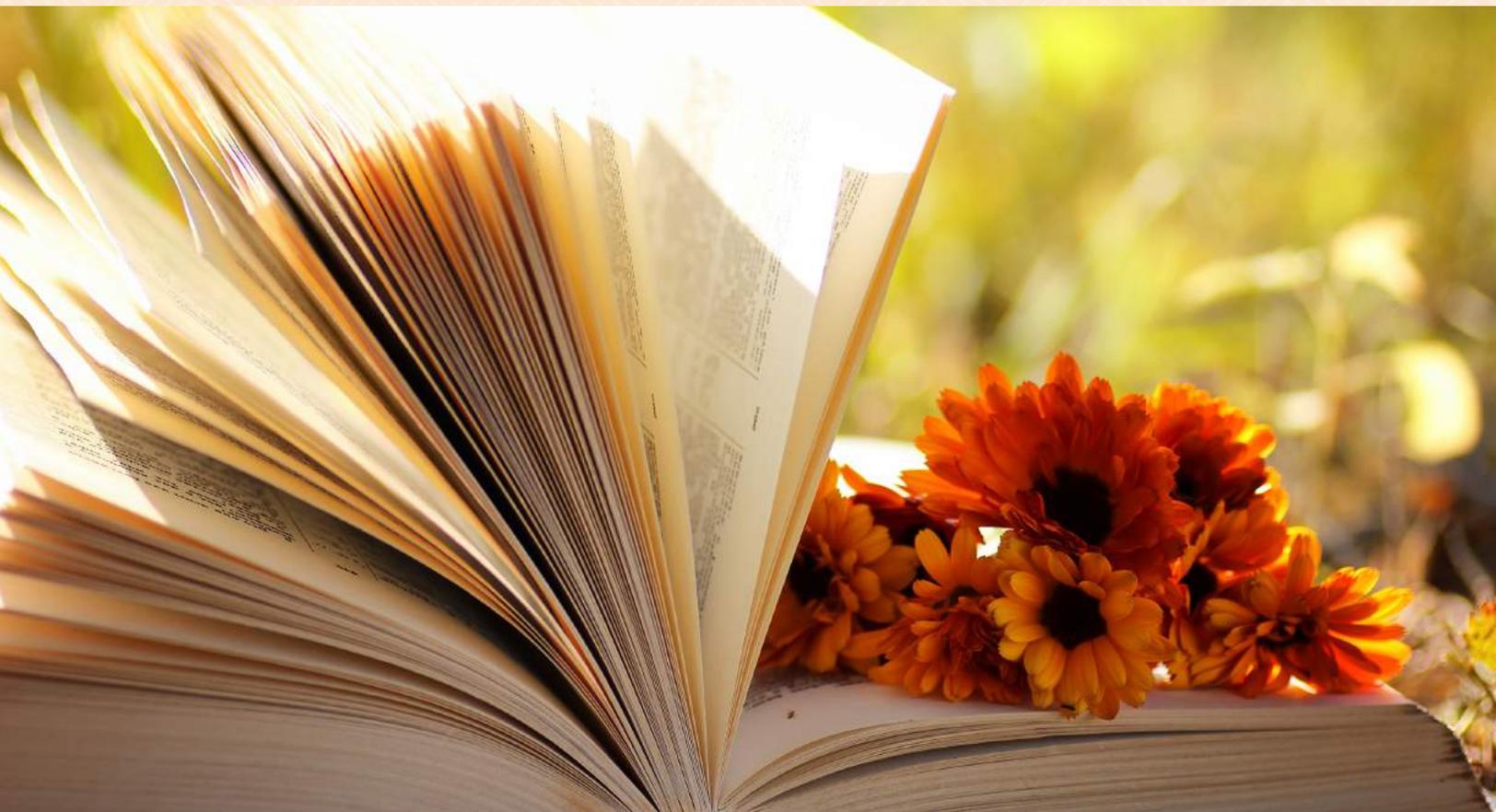
Next year in Jerusalem



ALL-NIGHT LEARNING

Shavuot

AT DATA OF PLANO • SATURDAY NIGHT, MAY 19



TALMUD STUDY

with Rabbi Zakon

GUN CONTROL IN THE TORAH

with Rabbi Yogi

OPEN STUDY

Learn your own
thing!

Refreshments will be served | Learning begins at approximately 11:45.
Sponsorships are available



PLANO COMMUNITY BBQ

Celebrate the end of the school year with a BBQ together with the entire community.

**JUNE 3RD | 12:15 P.M.
PRESTON MEADOW PARK**

\$5 per person / \$20 per family

**For more information, contact
info@dataofplano.org**





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FOR MORE INFORMATION, CONTACT RABBI ELI NISSEL AT
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**August
5-10**

