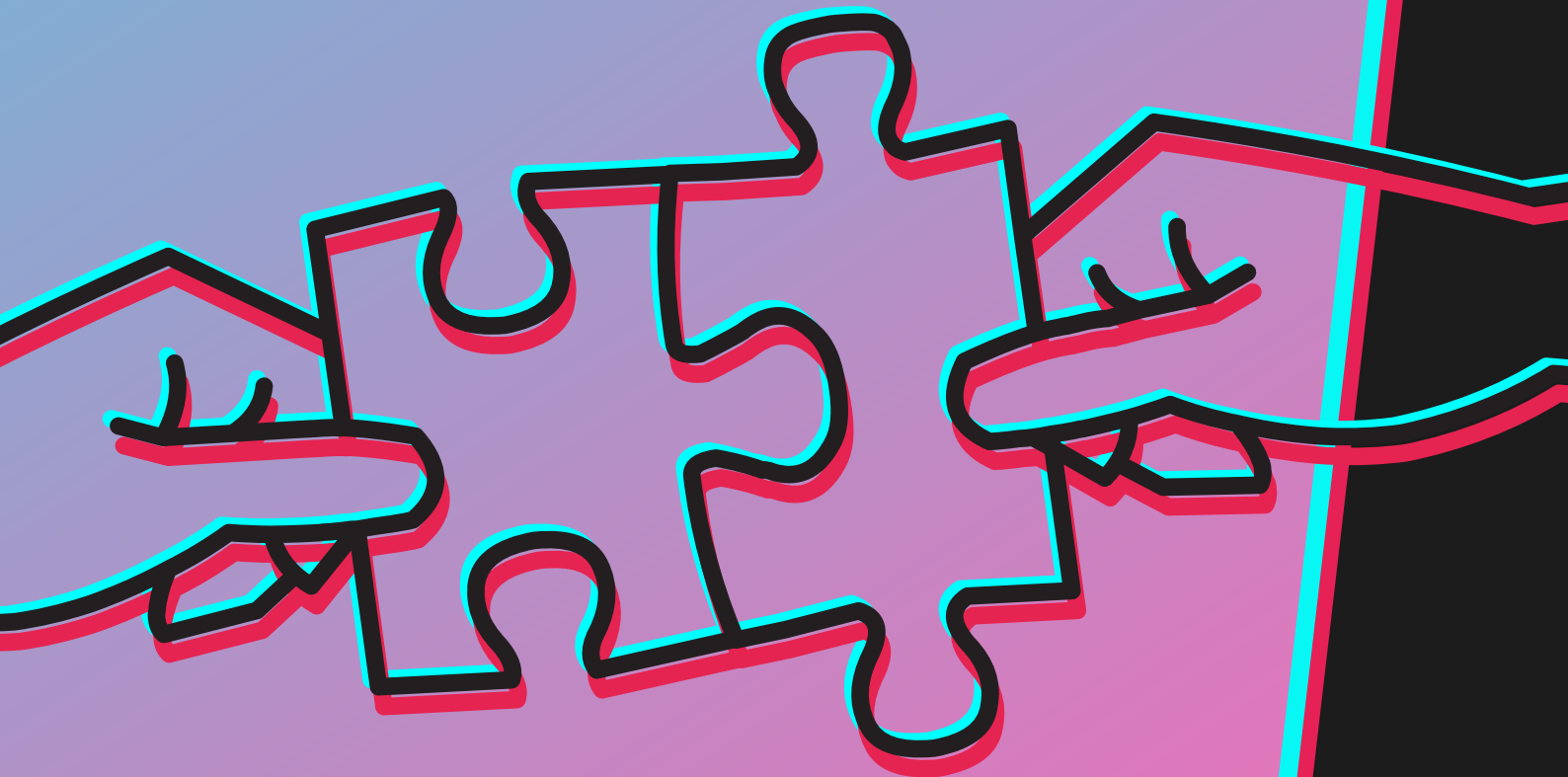




#CONNECTIONS

CHANGING **i** TO **WE**

SHAVUOT STUDY AND DISCUSSION BOOKLET



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SHALOM!

In Hebrew the word for both hello and goodbye is 'shalom.' That might be because sometimes we don't know whether we are coming or going :) BUT actually this word, which means peace, plays a unique role in our connections with people. In good times and more challenging moments, bringing a spirit of peace to others by getting in touch, sharing friendship and offering support, transforms the 'I' of an individual into the 'we' of a group.



We are living through a period of history which has brought this theme to life in a whole new way.

Tribe and Bnei Akiva promote the ethos of connections. Connections to our heritage, connections to our community and connections to each other.

This booklet explores the topic of 'connections' from interesting angles including the Talmud, Israel, the Royal Family & Shavuot.

Jump in and have a splash around as you discuss these ideas with family and friends. In doing so, the connections between our Shavuot celebrations and the original Mount Sinai experience over 3,300 years ago, will become even more meaningful in our lives.

Chag Sameach!

RABBI ELI LEVIN & TAMARA JACOBSON
TRIBE

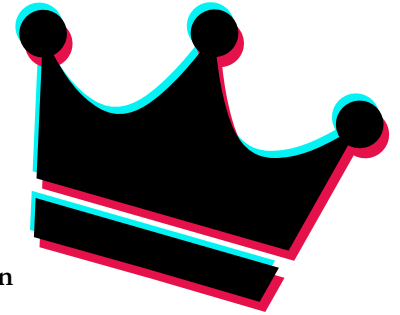
RAV JOEL KENIGSBERG & DANIEL ROSS
BNEI AKIVA

ROYAL CONNECTIONS

The Jewish community is blessed to enjoy close connections with the Royal Family. This has been highlighted on occasions when Chief Rabbis, including Chief Rabbi and Valerie Mirvis, have been hosted by the Royal Family for an overnight stay at Windsor Castle. Following the recent passing of HRH Prince Philip, Duke of Edinburgh, the story below is about the visit of Chief Rabbi and Lady Amelie Jakobovits in 1975.

Reproduced with permission from from 'Amélie': The Story of Lady Jakobovits, by Gloria Tessler, published by Valentine Mitchell.

After dinner...a two-and-a-half hour walk through the Castle corridors followed, with explanations by the Royal Family about the portraits on the walls. They ended up spending an hour in the private library, where the Chief Rabbi and librarian had a fascinating discussion. Both the Queen and Prince Philip asked the Chief Rabbi a variety of questions on the Prophets and other issues relating to the Old Testament. During this time, Amélie was invited by the Queen Mother to read a few pages of the then Princess Elizabeth's diary written at the time of her father's Coronation.



When the Queen said goodnight at around 1:30am Amélie asked for permission to express her innermost feelings. She told the gathering: 'Considering that only a few years ago my husband and I and, by extension, most members of the Anglo-Jewish community and its Commonwealth were treated like animals just because we were born Jewish, for us both to be celebrated tonight as we have been by the Royal Family, is a blessing which neither of us, nor our friends within the Anglo-Jewish community and its Commonwealth will ever forget.' The Queen Mother, with tears rolling down her cheeks, replied: 'Amélie, when people come to spend an evening with us they will always thank us for a lovely evening, but my daughter (the Queen), my family and I, are so grateful to have been able to hear you say that we have given you and our friends of the Jewish community so much pleasure.' This was, no doubt, one of the most moving moments in Amélie's life.

POINTS TO PONDER

This account mentions connections to culture, heritage and relationships. Can you identify them and which one stands out as most important for you?



What do Amélie's words of gratitude and the Queen Mother's response make you feel about the relevance of connections?

EGYPTIAN CONNECTIONS

On the next couple of pages, you will see a captivating piece of Talmud from the Tractate of Sotah pages 13a and 13b

Extract from the Noé Edition Koren Talmud Bavli - Vol. 20 - Masekhet Sota
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מי לנו גדול מיוסף? כו. תנו רבנן: בא וראה כמה חביבות מצות על משה רבינו, שכל ישראל פולין נתעסקו בביזוהו, והוא נתעסק במצות, שנאמר: "הכם לב יקח מצות וגו'."

ומנן היה יודע משה רבינו היכן יוסף קבור? אמרו: כרח בת אשר נשתירה מאותו הדור. הלך משה אצלה, אמר לה: בלום את יודעת היכן יוסף קבור? אמרה לו: ארון של מתכת עשו לו מצרים וקבעוהו בגלילוס הנגה, כדי שיתקרו מימיו. הלך משה ועמד על שפת נילוס, אמר לו: יוסף, יוסף, הגיע העת שנשבע הקדוש ברוך הוא שאני גואל אתכם, והגיעה השבועה שהשבעת את ישראל. אם אתה מראה עצמך - מוטב; אם לאו - הרי אני מנגיין משבעתך. מיד צף ארונו של יוסף.

ואל תתמה היאך ברזל צף, שהרי קתיב: "ויהי האחד מפיל הקורה ואת הברזל נפל אל המים וגו' אהה אדוני והוא שאול. ויאמר איש האלהים אנה נפל ויראהו את המקום ויקצב עץ וישלך שמה ויגוף הברזל." והלא דברים קל וחומר: ומה אלישע תלמידו של אליהו ואלהו תלמידו של משה - צף ברזל מפניו, מפני משה רבינו - על אחת כמה וכמה.

רבי נתן אומר: בקברניט של מלכים היה קבור. הלך משה ועמד על קברניט של מלכים, אמר: יוסף, הגיע עת שנשבע הקדוש ברוך הוא שאני גואל אתכם, והגיעה שבועה שהשבעת את ישראל. אם אתה מראה עצמך - מוטב, ואם לאו - הרי אני מנגיין משבעתך. באותה שעה נודעו ארונו של יוסף, נטלו משה והביאו אצלו.

וכל אותן שנים שהיו ישראל במדבר, היו שני ארונות הללו, אחד של מת ואחד של שכינה, מהלכין זה עם זה, והיו עוברין ושבוין אומרים: מה טיבן של שני ארונות הללו? אמרו: אחד של מת ואחד של שכינה. וכי מה דרכו של מת להלך עם שכינה? אמרו:

It states further in the mishna: **Who, to us, had a greater burial than Joseph**, as it was none other than Moses who involved himself in transporting his coffin. **The Sages taught in the Tosefta (4:6-7): Come and see how beloved mitzvot are^N to Moses our teacher. As, at the time of the Exodus, all the Jewish people were involved in taking the plunder from Egypt, and he was involved in the performance of mitzvot, as it is stated: "The wise in heart will take mitzvot"** (Proverbs 10:8).

The Gemara asks: **And from where did Moses our teacher know^N where Joseph was buried?** The Sages said: **Serah, the daughter of Asher, remained from that generation that initially descended to Egypt with Jacob. Moses went to her and said to her: Do you know anything about where Joseph is buried?** She said to him: **The Egyptians fashioned a metal casket for him and set it in the Nile [Nilus]¹ River^N as an augury so that its water would be blessed. Moses went and stood on the bank of the Nile. He said to Joseph: Joseph, Joseph, the time has arrived about which the Holy One, Blessed be He, took an oath saying that I, i.e., God, will redeem you. And the time for fulfillment of the oath that you administered to the Jewish people that they will bury you in Eretz Yisrael has arrived. If you show yourself, it is good, but if not, we are clear from your oath. Immediately, the casket of Joseph floated to the top of the water.**

And do not wonder how iron can float,^N as it is written in the verses describing how Elisha was able to cause iron to float: "But as one was felling a beam, the ax head fell into the water; and he cried, and said: Alas, my master! For it was borrowed. And the man of God said: Where did it fall? And he showed him the place. And he cut down a stick, and cast it in there, and the iron floated up" (II Kings 6:5-6). **And are these matters not inferred a fortiori: And just as Elisha, who was a mere student of Elijah, and Elijah was a mere student of Moses,^N as Elijah studied the Torah of Moses, was able to cause the iron to float before him, all the more so would it float before Moses our teacher himself.**

The Gemara now presents a different version of where Joseph was buried. Rabbi Natan says: **Joseph was buried in the crypt [kabbarnit]¹ of kings. Moses went and stood by the crypt of kings and said: Joseph, the time has arrived about which the Holy One, Blessed be He, took an oath saying that: I will redeem you. And the time for fulfillment of the oath that you administered to the Jewish people that they will bury you in Eretz Yisrael has arrived. If you show yourself, it is good, but if not, we are clear from your oath. At that moment, the casket of Joseph shook among the caskets. Moses took it and brought it over to himself.**

And all those years that the Jewish people were in the wilderness, these two arks, one a casket of a dead man, Joseph, and one the Ark of the Divine Presence, i.e., the Ark of the Covenant, were traveling together, and passersby would say: What is the nature of these two arks? They said to them: One is of a dead person and one is of the Divine Presence. The passersby would ask: And in what way is it the manner of a dead person to travel with the Divine Presence? They said in response:

NOTES

כמה חביבות מצות וכו' - Although many people claim that mitzvot are more precious to them than gold and silver, Moses was in a position where he could actually seize whatever he wanted from the plunder, but he occupied himself with mitzvot instead (*Ben Yehoyada*).

וינן - Although, as the Gemara notes, the caskets of the other sons of Jacob were taken along by the tribes, the locations of those caskets were known to the Jews, as the other brothers were buried by their children. The burial of Joseph was performed by the Egyptians. Therefore, the Jewish people did not know the location of his resting place. Furthermore, there is no indication in the verse that prophecy was employed to locate the casket of Joseph (*Maharsha*).

וקבעוהו בגלילוס הנגה - The midrash provides another reason for the Egyptians' burying Joseph's casket in the river: They knew that the brothers had taken an oath to transport it to Eretz Yisrael when they would depart from Egypt. By preventing them from finding the casket, the Egyptians thought that they could prevent the Jewish people from leaving (*Tosefot HaRash*).

היאך ברזל צף - The Gemara questions the ability of iron to float under these circumstances. Although far greater miracles were performed by Moses, miracles are generally done at the command of God, while a miracle that occurs only at the wish of a person is unusual and requires explanation. Therefore, the Gemara provides proof from a similar act of Elisha, who performed a miracle to enable the seemingly trivial return of a borrowed ax.

אליהו תלמידו של משה - Rashi explains that this does not mean that Elijah was actually a student of Moses, but rather that he was taught the Torah of Moses and transmitted it to others. In the introduction to his *Mishne Torah*, the Rambam notes that Elijah was a student of Ahijah the Shilonite, who was in turn a student of Moses. Alternatively, according to the opinion that Pinehas is also Elijah, then Elijah was actually a student of Moses, as Pinehas studied under him (*Iyyun Ya'akov*).





Perek I
Daf 13 Amud b

NOTES

His brothers kidnapped him from Shechem – משכם נגבדו: Rashi comments that he was actually kidnapped from Dothan and not from Shechem (see Genesis 37:17). Rashi here explains that Dothan was not actually the name of a place, but was a description of the brothers' plan to find a legal means [dar] to kill Joseph. In tractate *Sanhedrin* (102a) Rashi explains differently, that Dothan was a small village close to Shechem, so it can be said that he was kidnapped from the vicinity of Shechem. The Maharsha notes that according to Rashi's commentary on the Torah (Genesis 48:22), Shechem was the special portion of the land that Jacob promised to give to Joseph.

Anyone who performs a matter but does not complete it – כל העושה דבר ולא גמרו: One who does not complete a mitzva is lowered from the elevated state he was in while actually performing the mitzva, and therefore he is treated measure for measure and is demoted from his position of prominence (Maharal). One could explain in a similar manner that he is not given the ability to complete the building of his family, and therefore his wife and children die (*Iyyun Ya'akov*).

קיים זה כל מה שכתוב בזה.

This one, i.e., the deceased Joseph, fulfilled all that is written in this. Therefore, it is fitting that the two arks should lie side by side.

ואי לא עסיק ביה משה, ישראל לא הוא מיעסקי ביה? והכתוב: "ואת עצמות יוסף אשר העלו בני ישראל ממצרים קברו בשכם" ותו, אי לא איעסקו ביה ישראל, בניו לא הווי מיעסקי ביה? והכתוב: "ויהיו לבני יוסף לנחלה!"

The Gemara asks: **And if Moses had not dealt with the burial of Joseph, would the Jewish people not have dealt with it? But isn't it written that after Moses died: "And the bones of Joseph, which the children of Israel brought up out of Egypt, they buried in Shechem"** (Joshua 24:32), which indicates that the Jewish people completed the burial of Joseph? **And furthermore, if the Jewish people had not dealt with Joseph's burial, would his children not have dealt with it? But isn't it written in that same verse: "And they became the inheritance of the children of Joseph,"** as Joseph was buried in Shechem, which was then given to his descendants? Therefore, the question arises: **Why did Joseph's descendants initially leave the task of his burial to the Jewish people and Moses?**

אמר: הניחו לו, כבודו במרוצים יותר מבמוטעין, ותו אמרו: הניחו לו, כבודו בגדולים יותר מבקטנים.

The Gemara answers: **They said: Leave Joseph for others. It is more of an honor for Joseph to be buried by the many than by the few, and therefore it is better that the Jewish people be involved in the burial. And furthermore, they said: Leave Joseph for others. It is more of an honor for Joseph to be buried by one of the great men like Moses than by lesser ones like us.**

"קברו בשכם" – מאי שנא בשכם? אמר רבי חמא ברבי חנינא: משכם נגבדו, ולשכם נחזיר אבידתו.

In the aforementioned verse it states: "And the bones of Joseph, which the children of Israel brought up out of Egypt, they buried in Shechem, in the parcel of ground that Jacob bought from the sons of Hamor the father of Shechem for a hundred pieces of money" (Joshua 24:32). The Gemara asks: **What is different about Shechem that they specifically chose to bury Joseph there?** Rabbi Hama, son of Rabbi Hanina, says that the Jewish people said: His brothers kidnapped him from Shechem⁴ (see Genesis 37:12–28), and to Shechem we should return his lost body.

קשו קראי אהדדי. כתיב: "ויקח משה את עצמות יוסף עמו", וכתיב: "ואת עצמות יוסף אשר העלו בני ישראל וגו'".

The Gemara comments: **The verses contradict each other, as it is written: "And Moses took the bones of Joseph with him" (Exodus 13:19), and it is written elsewhere: "And the bones of Joseph, which the children of Israel brought up out of Egypt" (Joshua 24:32).** Who in fact took Joseph's bones?

אמר רבי חמא ברבי חנינא: כל העושה דבר ולא גמרו ובא אחר וגמרו, מעלה עליו הכתוב על שגמרו כאילו עשאו.

Rabbi Hama, son of Rabbi Hanina, says: **Anyone who performs a matter but does not complete it, and then another comes and completes it, the verse ascribes credit to the one who completed it as if he had actually performed the entire act. Due to the fact that the children of Israel completed Joseph's burial, the Torah ascribes them credit as if they had performed the entire act.**

רבי אלעזר אומר: אף מורדין אותו מגדולתו, דכתיב: "ויהי בעת ההיא וירד יהודה".

Rabbi Elazar says with regard to one who initiates performance of a mitzva but does not complete it when capable of doing so: **He is also demoted [moridin] from his position of greatness, as it is written: "And it came to pass at that time, that Judah went down [vayyered] from his brethren, and turned in to a certain Adullamite, whose name was Hirah" (Genesis 38:1).** Usage of the term "went down" indicates that the rest of Judah's brothers had demoted him from his position of greatness because he began the process of saving Joseph, but he did not complete it.

רבי שמואל בר נחמני אמר: אף קובר אשתו ובניו, דכתיב: "ותמת בת שוע אשת יהודה" וגו'. וכתיב: "וימת ער ואונן".

Rabbi Shmuel bar Nahmani says: **The episode with regard to Judah also indicates that one who initiates performance of a mitzva but does not complete it will also bury his wife and children as Judah did, as it is written: "And in process of time Shua's daughter, the wife of Judah, died" (Genesis 38:12), and it is written further: "And the sons of Judah: Er, and Onan, and Shelah, and Perez, and Zerah; but Er and Onan died in the land of Canaan" (Genesis 46:12).**

POINTS TO PONDER

How did carrying Joseph's remains out of Egypt connect the Jewish people to their past and future?



The first line of this page connects Joseph to the Torah. What similar connections can we make between our tradition and the way we live our lives in a modern world?

JERUSALEM CONNECTIONS

Shavuot in Jerusalem 1967

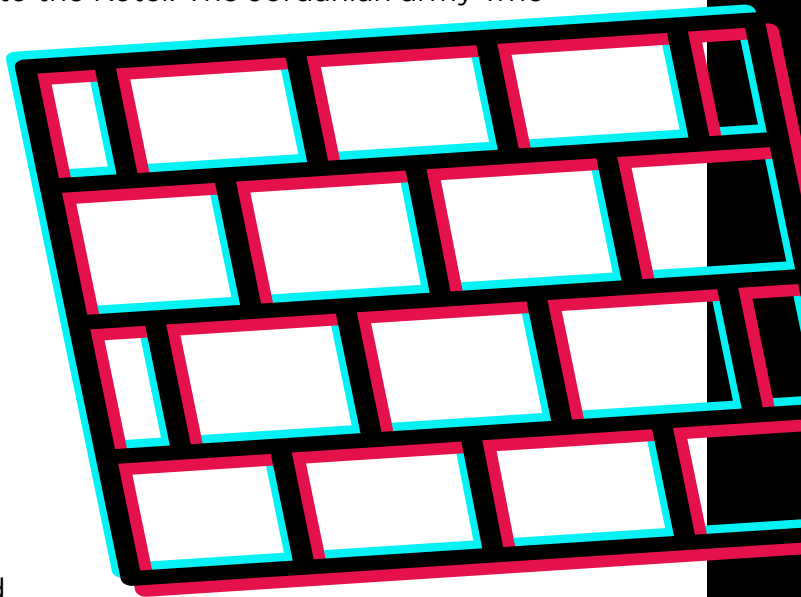
During the Temple era, Shavuot was one of the three occasions in the Jewish calendar when the entire Jewish people would make a pilgrimage to the Temple in Jerusalem. This practice was continued even after the destruction of the Temple by the Romans in the year 70 CE, with Jews visiting the Kotel, the Western Wall, instead and thereby keeping their connection to their past alive. Yet when Shavuot arrived in 1948, just one month after the declaration of the State of Israel, the Jews who were living there were unable to make their trip to the Kotel. The Jordanian army who occupied the eastern half of Jerusalem, which contained the Old City and the Kotel, had blocked off all routes to Jews wishing to go to their holiest place.

On the morning of Shavuot, 15 June 1967, the Old City was once again opened to Jews, only five days after it was reunited in the Six-Day-War. For the first time in almost 2000 years Jews could once again freely walk through the Old City and visit the Kotel, just as their ancestors did years ago.

Thousands of Jews took the special opportunity to once again travel to the Old City for one of the 'Shalosh Regalim,' the pilgrimage festivals, coming together and connecting with one another through their shared experience and yearning.

"Huge waves of people, more than 200,000, ascended to the last remnant of the Western Wall yesterday on the holiday of Shavuot," wrote Yosef Harif in the June 15, 1967 issue of Maariv, an Israeli newspaper. **"The pilgrimage began already at twilight, when it was still difficult to tell between the colours of blue and white [referring to one being able to differentiate between the colour of the tzitzit's threads, signifying the beginning of the time to recite the Shema]. The first who came were the ones who said the [kabbalistic] Tikkun Leil Shavuot passages all night, both old and young, and when the sunrise began, the flow of worshipers increased."**

The Jerusalem Post reported, "Every section of the population was represented. Kibbutz members and soldiers rubbing shoulders with [the ultra-orthodox, anti-Zionist] Neturei Karta. Mothers came with children in prams, and old men trudged steeply up Mount Zion, supported by youngsters on either side, to see the wall of the Temple before the end of their days. Some wept, but most faces were wreathed in smiles. For thirteen continuous hours, a colourful variety of all peoples trudged along in perfect order, stopping patiently when told to do so at each of six successive barriers set up by the police to regulate the flow."





An eyewitness described the scene:

“I’ve never known so electric an atmosphere before or since. Wherever we stopped, we began to dance. Holding aloft Torah scrolls we swayed and danced and sang at the tops of our voices. So many of the Psalms and songs are about Jerusalem and Zion, and the words reached into us a new life. As the sky lightened, we reached the Zion gate. Still singing and dancing, we poured into the narrow alleyways beyond.”

This year, 5781, 2021, will once again see thousands of Jews make the trip to the Old City of Jerusalem and the Western Wall after a year of restricted access and lockdowns. Thousands of Jews will connect with each other, Jerusalem, our past, and our much yearned for future, singing and dancing, celebrating Shavuot and the giving of the Torah, and the modern miracle of the ‘return of Jerusalem’ to the Jewish people.

POINTS TO PONDER

Why do so many Jews make the trip to Jerusalem on Shavuot or at other times? Because of what was - our ancestors did so when the Temple existed? Because of what is - we can go to Jerusalem and the Kotel nowadays and we’re overjoyed and grateful for it? Because of what will be - it’s a way to show desire for the rebuilding of the Temple?



For those not living in or near Jerusalem, how can we make where we are a place which connects us to Jewish life and history?

SHAVUOT CONNECTIONS



Did you know that Shavuot is the only festival that doesn't have a date specified in the Torah?

Unlike Pesach, Sukkot, Rosh Hashana and Yom Kippur – nowhere in the Torah is a date given for Shavuot. The Torah simply tells us to count seven weeks from Pesach and then to celebrate this Chag (festival). In the days before we had a fixed calendar and the months were calculated based on the sighting of the moon, this could have fallen out on the 5th, 6th or 7th of Sivan. The date of Shavuot may actually have changed each year!

Perhaps this ambiguity goes back to the very first Shavuot – when we received the Torah. In the Talmud (Masechet Shabbat 86b) the Sages argue with Rabbi Yossi about the date on which this took place. The first opinion is that we received the Torah on the 6th of Sivan (which also happens to be the date we celebrate the first day of Shavuot according to today's calendar), but Rabbi Yossi holds that we received it on the 7th. Is there something deeper behind their dispute than simply which date to mark off?

Rav Kook (Ein Ayah Shabbat 9:17) explains that the giving of the Torah parallels the creation of the world. Man was created on the sixth day and the world in its entirety was completed on the seventh. The argument as to which of these days the Torah was given on may reflect the dual goals of Torah in this world.





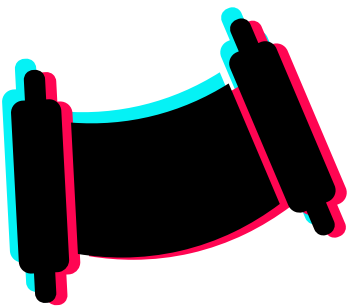
Day 6 – representing the completion of man – represents the impact that Torah can have on the human heart. Day 7 represents the impact of Torah on the nature of the universe itself. Shavuot gives us the opportunity to reflect on both of these elements, asking how we can use the light of Torah to impact the world around us at large too.

The giving of the Torah (on the 6th or 7th day) was both the ultimate aim of, and the continuation of the original act of creation. When describing God’s creation of the universe the Torah concludes with the word **לעשות** – to do or to make. Creation did not end in those 7 days, rather we are called upon in all generations to continue, to connect to God and become partners in creation.

Rav Soloveitchik explains that this is the reason why the Torah mentioned the creation story at all:

“If the Torah spoke at length about the creation of the world and related to us the story of the making of heaven and earth and all their hosts, it did so not in order to reveal cosmogonic secrets and metaphysical mysteries but rather in order to teach practical halakhah. The Scriptural portion of the creation narrative is a legal portion, in which are to be found basic, everlasting halakhic principles, just like the portion of Kedoshim (Lev. 19) or Mishpatim (Exod. 21). If the Torah then chose to relate to man the tale of creation, we may clearly derive one law from this... that man is obliged to engage in creation and the renewal of the cosmos.”

POINTS TO PONDER



What is the connection between the creation of the world and the giving of the Torah?



How can we be partners in creation?



SIGN OFF

Over the past year we've had social distancing and been physically separated, yet this has only served to highlight the importance of social relationships. It has forced us to re-examine the way we can connect to each other – as individuals, as families, as communities and as a whole Jewish people.

In this booklet we've tried to examine some of those connections: the relationship between the Anglo-Jewish community and the Royal family, the links between Joseph and Moses in Egypt, the bond between the Jewish people and Jerusalem, and the partnership between humankind and God.

All of these connections are manifestations of the relationship and link between us and other people, between us and God and between us and our world. They all link us to our past, present and future.

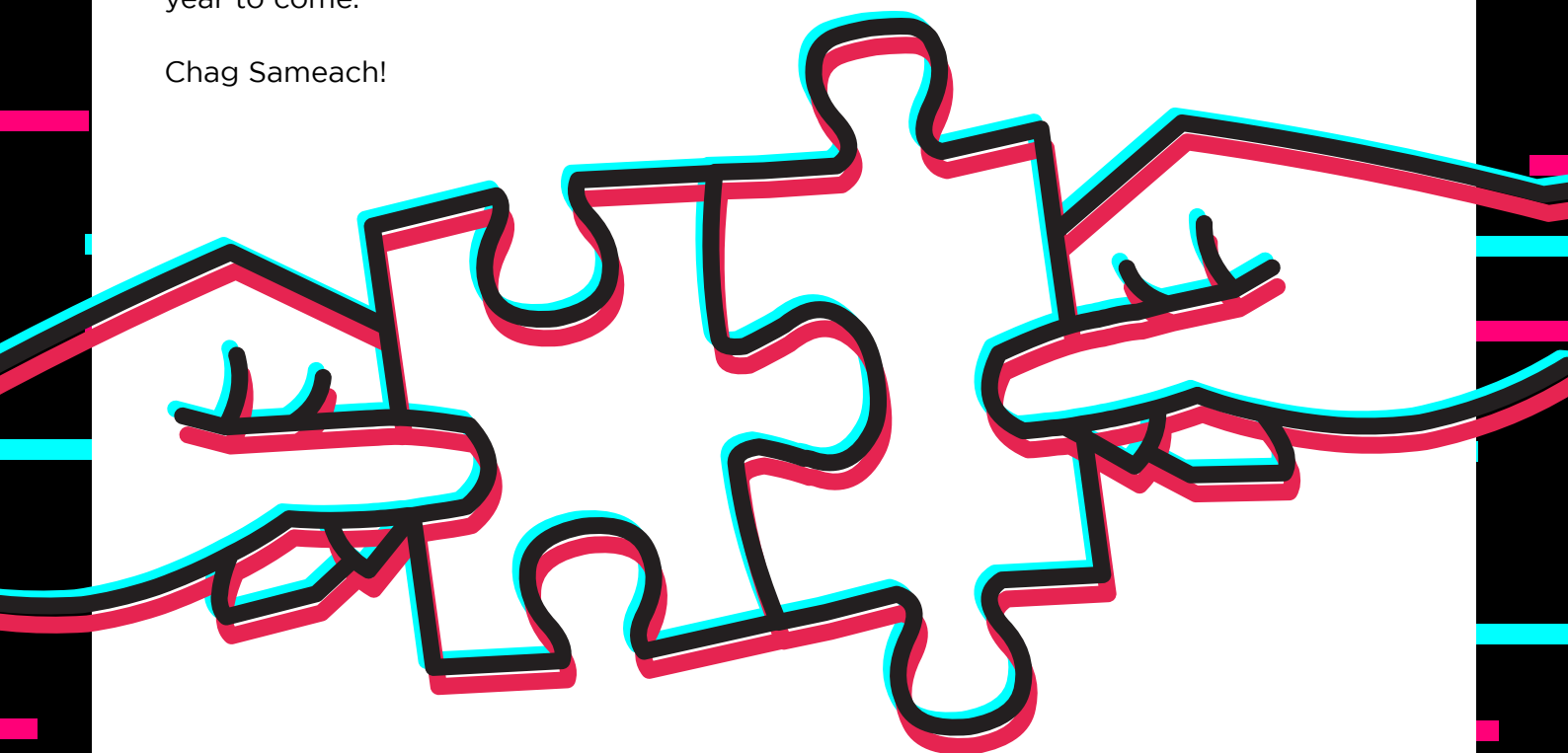
Shavuot is all about connections, transitioning from I to something far greater: we.

It is only when we connect and by definition transcend the individualistic I that we can truly be great.

At the foot of Mount Sinai, the Jewish nation was “like one people with one heart,” standing united as a people. We celebrate Matan Torah, the giving of the Torah and the enhancement of our connection to God through the instruction of His mitzvot - commandments. By celebrating this festival, we connect to our past by following in our ancestors' footsteps, and our future by praying that next year's Shavuot celebrations take place in the Temple.

This Shavuot, let's seize the present and take a minute to think and reflect on our various connections, exploring how we can strengthen and enhance them over the year to come.

Chag Sameach!



In Tribute to
Yoni Jesner z"l
who lived the
ideals of Bnei
Akiva and Tribe
by contributing
so much to
community life.



On the importance of connections between people Yoni said

“

Always laugh when someone makes a joke.

Always push yourself to go out with friends, even if you
can't be bothered - you'll be happy in the end.

Never blow your nose in front of people.

Always listen when people tell you
about themselves.

”

If you would like to volunteer for Tribe, Bnei Akiva
or the Yoni Jesner Foundation, please get in touch:

info@tribeuk.com

info@bauk.org

info@yonijesner.org

Proud to work in partnership



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