

## A LESSON FROM THE PARASHA

### Fresh Every Day

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GUEST CONTRIBUTOR

POP QUIZ: ON WHICH DATE WAS THE TORAH given? Obvious answer: it's more complicated than you think.

Logically, the first place we should look is in this week's parasha. It is here that the Torah discusses the *shalosh regalim*, telling us what each *chag* commemorates and the date such commemoration takes place. And so, the Torah's narrative about Shavuot, the *chag* that we know commemorates the giving of the Torah:

You shall count for yourselves... from the day that you bring the Omer, seven complete weeks. Until the day after the seventh week, you shall count fifty days, and you shall bring a new *mincha* to Hashem. (23:15-16)

Well, this doesn't offer us much information at all! It doesn't give us an exact date, nor does it even mention that this *chag* is to

commemorate the giving of the Torah! The only information that we have is that Shavuot is to be celebrated fifty days after the bringing of the Omer and on that day you shall offer a "new *mincha*." In fact, **nowhere** in the Torah is the exact date of *mattan* Torah mentioned!

And so our next step is to turn to the Talmud. There we will have a bit more luck. We have learned:

On the sixth of Sivan the Ten Commandments were given to Yisroel. R' Yose says, "It was on the seventh." (Shabbos 87a)

At first glance, this seems to be exactly what we are looking for; the Rabbanan say it was given on the sixth of Sivan and R' Yose says it was given on the seventh. However, upon second glance we have a small problem; it is all fine and dandy according to the Rab-

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## A TIMELY HALACHA

RABBI CHAIM HEINEMANN

In order to better appreciate what is involved in the creation of an *eruv*, and in particular, to understand the issues surrounding the construction and maintenance of the Cincinnati Eruv, we would like to set out a brief summary of the main *halachos* governing the prohibition of carrying on Shabbos.

For the purposes of carrying on Shabbos, there are four different domains, each with different rules.

1. *Reshus Harabim* or a public domain, is generally described as a public thoroughfare at least 16 *amos* wide. There are many intricacies involved with the qualifications of an area as a *reshus harabim*.

2. *Reshus Hayachid* is a private domain which contains an area of at least four *tefachim* by four *tefachim* and is generally surrounded by enclosures at least 10 *tefachim* high. The enclosures can take a

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## TIDBITS OF CINCINNATI JEWISH HISTORY

RABBI MOSHE TZVI CRYSTAL

On the 20th of Iyar, 5659 (1899), the Hebrew protective club of Cincinnati was formed. The club was mostly made up of Eastern-European immigrants who had for some time been suffering from harassment at the hands of young hoodlums. Things came to a head when Rabbi Avraham Yaakov Gershon Lesser, who was already a man over 70, was beaten severely. After appeals to law enforcement did not seem to help, the men were motivated to take things into their own hands. The club was founded with 400 members from eight different synagogues, with their numbers growing rapidly afterwards as well. The goals of the club included prosecuting those who attack Jews, hiring a lawyer towards that end, and hiring a private investigator to investigate the police department for not fulfilling its obligation to protect the populace.

"HEBREWS ORGANIZE FOR PROTECTION." CINCINNATI ENQUIRER, 1 MAY 1899. RETRIEVED FROM CINCINNATIJUDAICAFUND.COM/INDEX.PHP/DETAIL/OBJECTS/1430

## A RIDDLE FOR YOU

What is something visible that if not seen is permissible but if seen becomes forbidden?

Look for the answer in two weeks!

PREVIOUS RIDDLE:

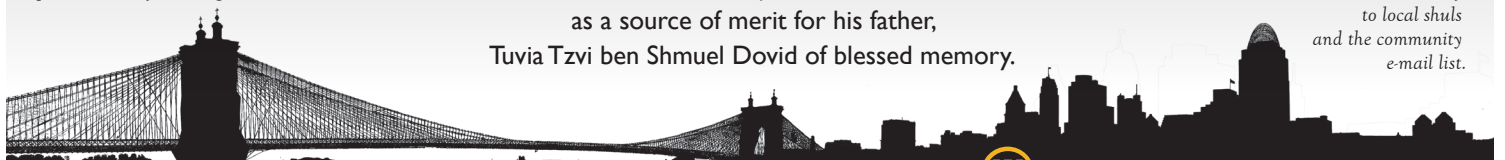
Q Which mitzvah was only fulfilled six times in the history of the world?

A The mitzvah of building a dwelling place for Hashem. (*Sefer Hachinuch* Mitzvah 95) The six times were 1. In the desert 2. Shiloh 3. Nov 3. Givon 5. First Bais Hamikdash 6. Second Bais Hamikdash.

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## A TIMELY HALACHA

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variety of different forms.

3. *Carmelis* is a quasi-public domain that does not have the attributes of a *reshus harabim* as prescribed by the Torah. A *carmelis* is usually described as an area of at least four *tefachim* by four *tefachim* which is not enclosed in a manner that would otherwise render it a *reshus hayachid*.

4. *Mekom P'tur* is an area which, because of its small size or location, does not fall into any of the categories set out above.

The biblical prohibition of carrying on Shabbos consists of carrying an object between a *reshus hayachid* and a *reshus harabim* or carrying an object across a *reshus harabim* for a distance of four *amos*.

The *chachamim* added on a number of prohibitions to prevent an individual from accidentally violating a biblical prohibition. Thus, one cannot carry within a *carmelis* for a distance of four *amos*, between a *carmelis* and a *reshus harabim* or between a *carmelis* and a *reshus hayachid*. One also may not carry within a *reshus hayachid* which is accessible to more than one individual or family (e.g., a courtyard) without making an *eruv chatzeiros*. An *eruv chatzeiros* is a device by which a group of homes becomes partners in an amount of bread or matzo, thus making them like one household.

The goal in creating a proper *eruv* is to render the entire area within the *eruv* into a *reshus hayachid* by way of walls or enclosures. In addition, it is necessary to make an *eruv chazeiros* and also acquire the rights to make an *eruv* from municipal authorities

In the coming weeks we will continue with the laws of *eruv* and discuss how the Cincinnati Eruv was built and continues to be maintained. 🕍

## GREAT ACTS OF ORDINARY PEOPLE

EHUD WAS STATIONED ON THE LEBANON BORDER in 1982 during the Lebanon war, waiting for the word that meant it was his battalion's turn to take part in the fighting. Understandably, nerves were running high. The chance to daven the three daily prayers was a welcome part of Ehud's day. It was a welcome relief to have a chance to pray for his and everyone else's safety. Yaron, another soldier in his platoon, expressed one day that he saw the religious guys go pray for their safety and he wished he knew how to pray as well but he had come from a completely secular background and didn't know how. "I'll tell you

## Fresh Every Day CONTINUED

banan that we commemorate *mattan* Torah (i.e. celebrate Shavuos) on the sixth of Sivan, but according to R' Yose, why do we celebrate Shavuos on the sixth if he maintains that the Torah was given on the seventh?

Even worse:

It is difficult to me; how do we maintain that Shavuos is the holiday that commemorates *mattan* Torah? After all, we pasken like R' Yose! ...And yet we celebrate Shavuos on the sixth!" (M.A. O.C. 494:1)

Of course, this raises a side question; what are the Rabbanan and R' Yose even arguing about in the first place? Wasn't the Torah given 50 days after the day that they left Mitzrayim?

Rava says, "Everyone agrees that they arrived in the wilderness of Sinai on Rosh Chodesh...And everyone agrees that the Torah was given on Shabbos...What they disagree on was on what day was Rosh Chodesh. R' Yose holds that Rosh Chodesh was on Sunday...and the Rabbanan say it was on Monday..." (Shabbos 87a-87b)

Now that we have this piece of information, this raises another issue, namely, that in the days before the fixed calendar, the months could either be 29 days or 30 days. Currently, the way our calendar is fixed,



what to do," Ehud said. "Come with me when I go pray, and when you hear someone say a blessing say this word - *Amen*. It states your belief in G-d and is a tremendous merit for a person." Yaron took Ehud's advice. Several weeks later the active war ended and Ehud's battalion was sent home. A few years later Ehud was walking down the street when he was accosted by

Nissan is 30 days and Iyar is 29 days, so the sixth of Sivan (Shavuos) is fifty days from the 2<sup>nd</sup> day of Pesach. However, if one of those factors changed, i.e. both Nissan and Iyar were 29 days, or both were 30 days, then the date of Shavuos (fifty days after the second day of Pesach) could be either on the seventh of Sivan or the fifth of Sivan, respectively! So, of course, this begs the question: how could the holiday that allegedly is supposed to commemorate the giving of the Torah not even be tied to the date (whenever that is) on which the Torah was given?!

Kli Yakar, commenting on the aforementioned *passuk* (23:17) explains by means of answering the question that we posed earlier: why doesn't our *passuk* point out that Shavuos is the *chag* that commemorates the giving of the Torah?

The answer is that the Torah is hinting to this through the phrase, "and you shall bring a **new mincha** to Hashem." One should not feel compelled to tie the giving of the Torah to one specific date in the calendar. Rather, the Torah should be new and fresh **every** day, so that **every** day, no matter if it is the seventh of Sivan or the tenth of Kislev, one should feel that the Torah is being given to him fresh, on **that** day! And since the Torah does not want to limit this feeling to the "real" anniversary of *mattan* Torah, it merely hints to the event by saying that on Shavuos one should bring a **new mincha** to Hashem. This is such a fundamental idea that the Torah will not even tie the holiday of commemoration to the actual date. Instead, it remains cloaked in ambiguity, and it turns out that, the way our calendar is fixed, we don't even have the holiday on the "correct" date! 🕍

## The Bluegrass crew kicking off the Lag Ba'Omer event.

a religious looking man who appeared to be a total stranger. "Don't you remember me? Think Lebanon, prayer, *Amen*..." "Yaron?" Ehud asked incredulously. "What happened?" "Ever since you told me about *Amen*, I couldn't get it out of my head. What's this *Amen* business? I was determined to find out. Someone directed me to a Yeshiva to find the answer I was seeking. And then I stayed to learn about Shabbos and *berachos* and many other things until I am who you see today!" 🕍