



# MOOR LANE MORE TORAH

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## On The Receiving End

By R' Yaakov Aryeh Salamon



All Jewish holidays – but one – are distinguished by specific mitzvot which accompany their celebration: Rosh Hashanah's shofar, Yom Kippur's fasting, Sukkot's temporary living and "four species," Passover's Seder and matzah. The one exception is Shavuot. Although the standard prohibitions of melacha that apply to the other holidays apply no less to Shavuot, and while special sacrifices were brought on every Jewish holiday, there is no specific ritual or "mitzvah" associated with Shavuot. There are, of course, foods traditionally eaten on the day such as blintzes and cheesecake. And there is a widely observed custom of spending the entire first night of Shavuot immersed in Torah readings and study. But still, there is no Shavuot equivalent to the shofar or the etrog or the seder.

Rav Levi Yitzchak of Berditchev suggested that perhaps the lack of mitzvot of Shavuot was why it is called throughout the Talmud "Atzeret" which means

"holding back" and refers to the prohibition on melacha. The lack of particular Shavuot mitzvot, though, may reflect something beautiful: Shavuot, although characterized by the Torah only as an agricultural celebration, is as well the day on which the Torah was given at Mount Sinai. That experience involved no particular

**That experience involved no particular action; the very essence of inactivity, acceptance of G-d's Torah and His will**



action; it was in a sense, the very essence of inactivity, acceptance of G-d's Torah and His will. The revelation was initiated by G-d;

all that our ancestors had to do – though it was a choice of huge significance – was to receive, to submit to the Creator and embrace what He was bestowing on us.

The Midrash compares the revelation at Sinai to a wedding, with G-d the groom and His people the bride. Just as a marriage is legally brought about in the Jewish tradition by the bride's simple choice to accept the wedding ring, so did the Jewish people at Mount Sinai create its eternal bond with the Creator by accepting His 'gift of gifts' to them. That acceptance may well be the essential aspect of Shavuot. A positive, active mitzvah for the day, an action or observance would by definition contradict the day's main theme of receptivity. Therefore the order of the day is to re-enact our ancestors' acceptance of the Torah by design not through any specific ritual but rather by re-receiving and absorbing it. This is precisely what we do on Shavuot: open ourselves to the laws and concepts of G-d's Torah and accept them anew, throughout the night, even as our bodies demand that we stop and sleep.



# Out of Synch

*Rabbi Moshe Stamler*

For many weeks this year the *קריאת התורה* in *ארץ ישראל* and in *חוץ לארץ* are 'out of synch' with each other, causing difficulties for people travelling back and forth. The reason for this discrepancy is that this year, the Eighth Day of Pesach, *Acharon shel Pesach*, fell on Shabbat. What follows is an excerpt from an article by Rabbi Yirmiyah Kaganoff of Jerusalem which explores this topic.<sup>1</sup> On this Yom Tov day, observed only outside Eretz Yisrael, the special Yom Tov reading in chutz la'aretz was *Aser te'aser*, whereas in Eretz Yisrael this Shabbat was after Pesach (although the house is still chometz-free!), and the reading is Parshat Acharei. Thus, in chutz la'aretz there is a need to double a parsha, and, according to what is today common practice, that parsha is Matot and Masei.

The practice I just mentioned however creates a very unusual phenomenon:

The subsequent Shabbat, the Jews of Eretz Yisrael are already reading Parshat Kedoshim, whereas outside Eretz Yisrael the reading is Parshat Acharei. The communities outside Eretz Yisrael ignore the opportunity of doubling up parshiyot Acharei and Kedoshim, Behar and Bechukotai and Chukat and Balak, all of which are doubled together upon other occasions, and wait until the very last parsha of Bamidbar to combine Matot with Masei. Thus, the disparity between Eretz Yisrael and chutz la'aretz lasts

for over three months, until Parshat Masei, which, as I mentioned above, outside Eretz Yisrael is doubled into Matot–Masei. This means that those who return to chutz la'aretz after spending Pesach in Eretz Yisrael will find that they have missed a parsha. Unless, of course, they decide to stay in Eretz Yisrael until the Nine Days.



## The Long Wait to Double

This leads to a very interesting question: Why is the disparity between Eretz Yisrael and chutz la'aretz allowed to last for such a long period of time? There are three potential doubled parshiyot that are passed before one gets to Parshat Matot – all weeks in which those in chutz la'aretz could combine two parshiyot in order to catch up.

As you can imagine, we are not the first to raise this question, which is indeed raised by one of the great sixteenth-century poskim,

the Maharit <sup>2</sup> (Shu't Volume II # 4). He answers that Shavuot should ideally fall between Bamidbar and Naso, and that combining either Acharei with Kedoshim, or Behar with Bechukotai would push Shavuot until after Parshat Naso. Indeed, in these years, this is what happens in Eretz Yisrael, but there is no option there, since there are simply not enough Shabbatot for all the parshiyot. In chutz la'aretz, since one can have the readings occur on the preferred weeks, we delay the combined parshiyot until after Shavuot.

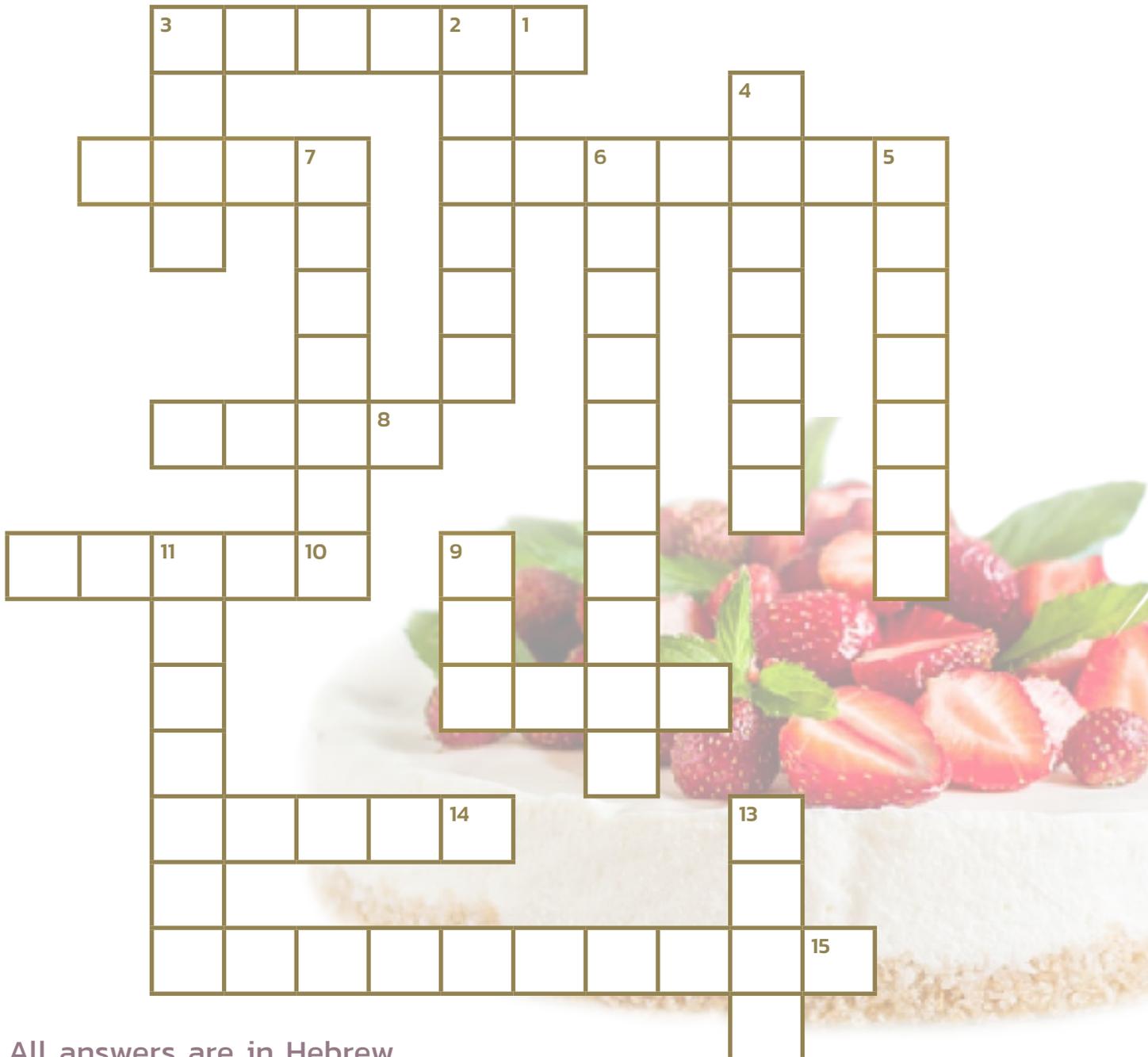
However, the Maharit notes that this does not explain why the parshiyot of Chukat and Balak are not combined, although he notes that the Syrian communities indeed follow this practice — that is, on leap years when *Acharon shel Pesach* falls on Shabbat, they combine parshiyot Chukat and Balak, but read Matot and Masei on separate weeks, as is done in Eretz Yisrael.

To explain why the parshiyot of Chukat and Balak are not combined in other communities, the Maharit concludes that once most of the summer has passed and the difference is what to read on only three Shabbatot, we combine Matot with Masei, which are usually combined, rather than Chukat and Balak, which are usually separate. ♦

<sup>1</sup> It can be accessed in full at [RabbiKaganoff.com](http://RabbiKaganoff.com). I have changed the alliteration to Sefardi pronunciation.

<sup>2</sup> Rabbi Joseph Trani or Joseph di Trani born in Tsefat 1568, died in Constantinople 1639, lived in Greece; son of the Mabit.

# Shavuot Crossword



All answers are in Hebrew

## Across

- 1 Do not kill  
 5 Do not be jealous  
 7 The 'stopping' תג  
 8 The blasts of the \_\_\_\_\_ could be heard  
 10 \_\_\_\_\_ שלשת ימי  
 12 The month when the הר סיני בני ישראל came to  
 14 False witness  
 15 The 5th of the עשרת הדברות

## Down

- 2 A poem read on שבועות [by Ashkenazim]  
 3 Another name for הר סיני  
 4 The special מנחה  
 5 Do not steal  
 6 Kingdom of priests  
 7 Treasured nation  
 9 Rising from הר סיני as if it were a furnace  
 11 Fruit brought from שבועות onwards  
 13 Harvest

# MORNING BLESSINGS

## *After No Sleep*



BY RABBI  
NAMIR COHEN

*You've stayed up all Shavuot night, and you know that there is some protocol as to what morning brachot you should or should not be saying, but in your semi-awake state of mind, you can't quite remember. Here's a round-up of the relevant halachot.*

The Ben Ish Chai quotes the Zohar in parshat Emor that the early chasidim did not sleep on Leil Shavuot and instead studied the Torah, saying 'Let's come and acquire an inheritance for us and our children in this world and the world to come'. Rabbi Shimon Bar Yochai says that one who studies Torah on Leil Shavuot will be inscribed in the book of remembrance and the Almighty will bless him with a multitude of blessings and crowns in the Higher Worlds. It is therefore the custom in many Kehilot - including our Kehila - to spend the night immersed in the Torah. This raises a halachic debate regarding the morning blessings after staying up the whole night.

We have outlined below the correct way to act according to the Sephardi pesak and that of the Mishna Berura.

	מנהג ספרדים	מנהג ע"פ המ"ב
1 ברכת על נטילת ידים	Wash without blessing	Wash with blessing, after being excused
2 ברכת השחר	Say	Say
3 אלקי נשמה	Say	Get someone who slept to make blessing for you, unless you slept during the day before, in which case you can say it
4 המעביר שינה	Say	Get someone who slept to make blessing for you
5 ברכת התורה	Say	Get someone who slept to make blessing for you unless you slept during the day and didn't learn immediately after maariv in which case you can say it yourself. If you can't find someone to say it for you, then you should have in mind to discharge your obligation when you say Ahavah Rabbah, and learn immediately after shachrit

## We will now explain the reasoning behind the above chart.

1) Rosh and Rashba argue over the reason for washing one's hands in the morning. Rosh learns that whilst one sleeps, one will inevitably touch areas of the body which are usually covered. Rashba learns that whilst we sleep we return our souls to our Maker, and in the morning we receive them anew. We therefore wash our hands at the start of a new day of service of G-d, like the Kohanim did in the Holy Temple. Therefore, if one didn't sleep, according to the Rosh there is no reason to wash. According to the Rashba however, one should still wash, representing the general daily cycle when G-d returns the souls of His creations. So, since it is doubtful as to which reason we follow, the Mishna Berura concludes one should be excused and thus even according to the Rosh be obligated to wash. According to the Sephardim however, one should still not make a blessing on washing hands even after being excused, as they understand the Rosh's view to be that washing was only enacted for someone who touched their body whilst asleep. In any event one should wash one's hands before prayer.

2) These blessings are not sleep related.

3) & 4) Theoretically Sephardim should not make these blessings and Ashkenazim should, because Maran [46.8] writes that one should only make these blessings as he performs or sees the related happenings, e.g. only make Hanoten lasechvi after actually hearing the sound of the rooster, whereas the Rema comments (and this is the opinion of the Mekubalim) that one should say them all regardless, since it's the way of the world for these things to happen, even if this individual hasn't had this experience. However, l'halacha Sephardim follow the Mekubalim, whilst Ashkenazim follow the Mishna Berura who quotes the view that these two berachot are an exception where we do not follow the Rema: as the wording of these blessings is personal ['the soul You gave me', 'sleep from my eyes'] one should say them only if having slept.

5) The Tur in the name of the Rosh says that Bircat Hatorah expires after any sleep. Rabbeinu Tam holds that it only expires after the next Alot Hashachar. Therefore,

if one didn't sleep at night then according to the Rosh one cannot make this blessing. And, if one slept in the day according to Rosh one should make a blessing at the end of that sleep. The Bet Yosef seems to take on the Rosh's view and therefore, if one didn't sleep all night one shouldn't make a blessing, unless one slept during the day before, after which either way one can make the blessing. Although Sephardim generally follow the ruling of Maran, here Rabbi Akiva Eiger says that the only argument between Rosh and Rabbeinu Tam is regarding one who slept during the day, but they both agree that Alot Hashachar obligates even someone who never slept to say Bircat Hatorah. Since the Arizal says that one should in any event make this blessing in the morning, we follow the reasoning of Rabbi Akiva Eiger. The Mishna Berura does not follow the reasoning of Rabbi Akiva Eiger and maintains that there are two arguments, and therefore one can only make the blessing if one slept in the day. ♦



# Work Today, Eat Tomorrow

By R' Yishai Lister

The blades of grass seemed to stand at attention to all the muscular ants marching in perfect formation through its green ranks, carrying all sorts of things, big, small, some of them fifty times their own weight. All day and night, for hours and miles on end, working ceaselessly... but for what?

This is the exact question the grasshopper asked the ant at the back of the group: "What on earth are you all working so hard for?" he enquired. "We're working to collect food and water." responded the ant. "What?" asked the grasshopper, "Why? There's so much food around. Look up! You see those scrumptious, juicy leaves? Hmmm! Now, look down. You see these yummy worms in the ground? You're all wasting your time! You need a break after all that hard work! Look, I'll take you to the top of a tree and we can sit in the sun together and I'll even play you one of my secret grasshopper songs."

"No," said the ant. "I must not stop, and if you don't get a move on collecting food yourself, you'll be sorry". "Bah!" chuckled the grasshopper, "you guys are seriously too s-e-r-i-o-u-s! You need to enjoy life. It's too short to be spent scurrying around like a who-knows-what, collecting things that are all around for all to eat from!" And off the grasshopper went - leaving the boring ants to their hard work - to sit in the warm sun and sing to his heart's content.

But before he knew it the sun wasn't so warm anymore and his singing voice started to sting with the cold. He went down to catch a refreshing drink from the ground, but oh no! The ground was covered in a thick, white cold blanket. There were no puddles to be seen. But, not to worry! There's still rainwater stored in the thick tree leaves, and not only that but maybe he could eat some of it as well. So he took off towards the nearest tree, but when he got close, realisation dawned upon him... he only saw bare wooden branches. Not one leaf remained on the canopy that was once so green. And then it struck the grasshopper. No worms sticking out the ground, no scrumptious, juicy leaves. There was not so much food after all. At least there was no food outside. But deep inside the warm earth, there were some clever ants that worked at the right time, that didn't allow themselves to get distracted, oh there was plenty of food and drink for them all to share, plenty to go around! Firsts, seconds, thirds, fourths, endless portions! The ant was right after all. The grasshopper regretted wasting his time singing in the sun and enjoying himself all that time when he should have been working for his own future. Now the ants were singing and having a great time and the grasshopper had nothing, and when he came knocking on the ant's door and asked to be let in- "Bah!" came the

reply. "You're seriously not s-e-r-i-o-u-s enough!"

The Gemara (Avodah Zarah 3a) writes that when Hashem will build Olam Haba and give the Bnei Yisrael their reward for keeping the Torah, the people of the world will want to join in and receive reward for Torah and Mitzvot in Olam Hazeih but will ultimately be rejected by Hashem. It is too late to join in, the time will have passed for that. "Why shouldn't we receive any reward?" they will ask. "Give us another chance! We didn't realise we had to keep the Sheva Mitzvot B'nei Noach or anything! Let us try again now. Give us some Mitzvot to do."

"Ahh," Hashem will say. "It's too late for that now. One who works on Erev Shabbat will have food for Shabbat. One who doesn't work on Erev Shabbat, where will he eat from on Shabbat itself? It's too late to ask for Torah and Mitzvot now. The time has passed. Mashiach has arrived and Olam Haba will be built!"

Bnei Yisrael are like the ants. Hashem gave us the opportunity for Torah and Mitzvot to collect: Shabbat, Yom Tov, Tzedakah, Talmud Torah and many more mitzvot spread out for us to grab as much as possible from the time of Matan Torah and onwards. Bnei Yisrael work before it's too late. And Matan Torah started this incredible mission off. Get collecting! ♦

# It's Good To Be A Jew!

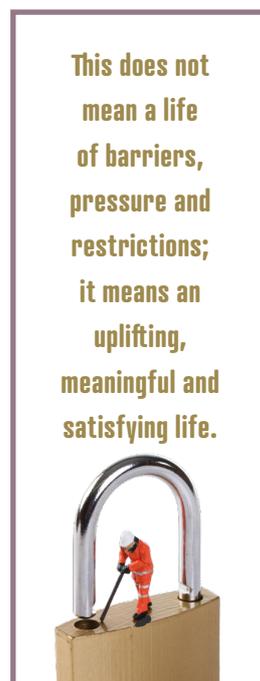
*R' Meir Simcha Cohen*



During the post-WWII era, there was a large influx of European Jewry immigrating to America, seeking peace and financial opportunities. When they arrived, however, many of them found that they would have to work long and hard hours to earn even just a paltry sum of money. To further compound matters, many jobs available involved having to work on Shabbat. They were informed that if they did not work on Shabbat, they would have nothing to return to on Monday. To their vast credit, many of them passed this significant test of faith and fiercely guarded their Shabbat, despite having to find a new job every week! However, whilst many of their children witnessed their heroism and were inspired to remain religious, a significant proportion of them unfortunately assimilated into American society. Rav Moshe Feinstein zt"l explained that some parents transmitted the news of their redundancy with a 'heavy heart', giving the distinct impression that Judaism is all about constraint and making sacrifices; their children 'understood' that it's not worth the bother. Others, however, came home each Friday with a smile, stating that they are confident and joyful in their commitment to Judaism. They taught by personal example that "It's good to be a Jew". It is no wonder that their descendants followed in their footsteps!

Perhaps this is the message of Shavuot.

Megillat Rut relates that Naomi attempted to dissuade Rut from converting to Judaism by stating that Judaism is 'full of rules and regulations', such as limits to how far one may walk on Shabbat and regarding whom one may marry.



Rut responded, "El asher tel'chi elech – Where you will go, I will go, Uva'asher talini alin – And from those whom you will marry, I will marry", and so forth. Whilst Naomi cautioned that we "*can't* go too far and *can't* just marry anyone", in the negative, Rut commented on "where you *will* go" and "whom you *will* marry", in the positive. Why the change?

Further, the Gemara relates that: Shabbat activities should be half focused on Hashem and half on ourselves (part self-care and relaxation and part spiritual and

G-dly); a regular weekday should be focused as much as possible on Hashem alone; and the Chagim are subject to a difference of opinion as to whether they are the same as the Shabbat or the weekday. However, the one Chag regarding which there is no dispute is Shavuot: all agree that part relaxation and joy is also required. This begs the question: of all the Chagim, Shavuot – which celebrates the Giving of the Torah, arguably the purpose of all creation – is in this respect the focal point of the Jewish calendar...and yet all agree that we need a little relaxation on this exceptionally spiritual day?!

Rav Avigdor Miller zt"l suggests that both our questions are based on a misconception. The Torah dictates 613 commandments to ensure a spiritual lifestyle. This does not mean a life of barriers, pressure and restrictions; it means an uplifting, meaningful and satisfying life. All agree that half the day's activities are to be focused on self-care and joy, *because* of – not *despite* – the holiness of the day. In the same vein, Rut responded to Naomi in the positive because she indeed viewed these commandments as positive. To quote Rav Miller: "[Rut] perceived these as refinements, not restrictions".

Let us celebrate this holy day by partly rejuvenating and relaxing with our families, demonstrating that indeed, "*It's good to be a Jew!*" ✦

# מגילת רות

ר' שר שלו' הלוי עפגין

כתב הר"ד אבודרהם [הספרדין] ז"ל – קריאת המגילות במועדים [בהוצאת אושא י - ס עמ' ר"מ] - וז"ל "ונוהגין לומר רות בשבועות", א"ה. וצ"ע מדוע לא מזכיר בשו"ע בהלכות שבועות הענין של קריאת מגילת רות בשבועות [אף שלא יהא מתוך הקלף] והלא הר"ד אבודרהם שמשם דלה הרמ"א את ההלכה הזו הוא באר המנהגים של מנהגי הספרדים וכפי שהעיד עליו מרנא בב"י או"ח סי' תכ"ה בתוד"ה ומ"ש רבינו ואפילו ראש חודש אלול שחל להיות בשבת מפטירין השמים כסאי וכו' והרב רבינו דוד אבודרהם [סדר הפרשיות עמ' ש"ג] והוא היה בקי בהני מילי טובא ולכן ראוי לסמוך עליו עכ"ל. א"כ מדוע איפוא לא סמך עליו כאן? הלא מדובר כאן לא בהלכה אלא במנהג!

## שאלה: מדוע כל הפסוקים במגילת רות מתחילים דוקא באות וי"ו.

(תשובה: א) אמ"ר חייא בר אבא וכו' ולמה ווי"ן לומר לך ווי לדור שגיבוריו יורדין. (מדרש לקח טוב)  
 ב) הטעם המפורסם ונגלה מבואר מדברינו כי אחרי שצורת המגילה הזאת כמספר ספור קרה בשכבר מן הראוי שיהיו פסוקיה כולם בוא"ו ואמנם היות הח' הללו יוצאים הנה הוא להורות שעזבה עמה ואלהיה ותדבק לבני ברית וזמה יבין המבין ענין נסתר כי וא"ו ומשך הוא"ו יעקב ויוסף גוף וברית חשבינן חד כדאיתא בספר התיקונים במקומות רבו מספור א"כ כל המגלה בענין הכנסה לברית הניתן לשמונה והוא מבואר לאשר עמדו בסוד ה'. (שרש יש להגר"ש אלקבץ זצ"ל בהקדמה).

## שאלה: מדוע כל הפסוקים במגילת רות מתחילין באות וא"ו חוץ משמונה פסוקים והם:

א. יתן וכו' ב. שבנה וכו' ג. הלהן וכו' ד. באשר וכו' ה. אני וכו' ו. עיניך וכו' ז. ישלם וכו' ח. ליני וכו'.  
 (תשובה: א) כל הפסוקים ברות מתחילים בו' חוץ מה' רמז לרות שנתחברה לאלה הנמולים לח' ימים. (מדרש לקח טוב, תוספות השלם עמ' צ"ד).  
 ב) ענין אחר לפי שח' צדיקים ומלכים יצאו מרות דוד שלמה עזיהו יותם חזקיהו אסא יהושפט צדקיהו. (שם)  
 ג) כתב בסדר הדורות דקנ"ט ע"ג שמצא בכתיב החסיד ר' ליב מסלוצק שהגאון בעל של"ה היה היה נשמת רות ולכן כל פסוקי רות ווי"ן חוץ משמונה [יתן יי לָכֶם... (פרק א', פסוק ט'). שְׁבֵנָה בְּנֵי... (פרק א', פסוק י"ב). עֵינֶיךָ בְּשָׂדֵה אֶשֶׁר יִקְצְרוּ... (פרק ב', פסוק ט'). יִשְׁלַם יי פְּעֻלָּךְ... (שם, פסוק י"ב). הִלָּהן תִּשְׁפְּרְנָה... (פרק א', פסוק י"ג). בְּאֶשֶׁר תְּמוֹתֵי אֲמוֹת... (שם, פסוק י"ז). אֲנִי מֵלֶאָה הִלְכֵתִי... (שם, פסוק כ"א). לִינִי הִלְיָה... (פרק ג', פסוק י"ג).] ור"ת הפסוקים ההם הוא ישעיה"ה בא"ה ר"ת בן אברהם הלוי עכ"ד והוא ט"ס וצ"ל בא"ל והוא ר"ת בן אברהם לוי והוא פלא. ועוד ע"ש בדבריו מה שמע בשם זקן וגדול בתורה בענין הזה. (שם הגדולים מערכת גדולים, סדר הדורות ח"א ה' אלפים שפ"ט).

## Crossword Answers

### Across

- 1 לא תרצה
- 5 לא תחמד
- 7 עצרת
- 8 שופר
- 10 הגבלה
- 12 סיון
- 14 עד שקר
- 15 כיבוד אב ואם

### Down

- 2 אקדמות
- 3 חורב
- 4 שתי הלחם
- 5 לא תגנב
- 6 ממלכת כהנים
- 7 עס סגולה
- 9 עשן
- 11 ביכורים
- 13 קציר