



Shearith Israel  
**SPANISH &  
PORTUGUESE**  
Synagogue of Montreal  
Est. 1768

# SHABBAT BULLETIN

May 27, 2023 | 7 Sivan, 5783



## Dvar Torah Shavuot 5783

By: Rabbi Yehoshua Ellis

Shavuot is a strange sort of holiday. On Shavuot we celebrate G'd giving the Torah to the Children of Israel, but the written Torah was given to us only just before Moshe died; the Oral Torah is still being revealed. Further the Torah never actually connects Shavuot to the giving of the Torah. Shavuot has three names in the Torah: holiday of the weeks, holiday of harvesting and holiday of first fruits. None of those names refers to the Torah at all. Why then do we make this connection?

The first and most obvious answer is that we did the math, it states in the Torah that the Children of Israel arrived at the wilderness of Sinai on the third month after leaving Egypt. Our tradition tells us that whenever it says "the month" in the Torah it means on the first day of the month, meaning that the Nation of Israel arrived at Sinai on the first day of the month of Sivan

and met with G'd on the five days later on the sixth of Sivan. The sixth of Sivan is the day that we arrive at when we count fifty days from the second day of Pessah, as the Torah instructs us regarding celebrating Shavuot.

How do the names of Shavuot connect it to the Torah? Hag Shavuot means the holiday of weeks, because we are instructed to count seven weeks and on next, the fiftieth day, is Shavuot. Fifty is the five books of the Torah multiplied by the ten commandments. The name Hag Habikkurim, the holiday of the first fruits.

Shavuot begins the process of the Children of Israel bringing their first fruit offering to the Temple in Jerusalem. The Midrash explains that Bikkurim is a reference to the Torah which is also referred to as the first. The final name the Torah gives to Shavuot is Hag Hakatzir, the holiday of the harvest. Harvesting grain is a major step in the process of producing bread. It fills us with great joy and represents a major milestone in the annual production process. However, it produces nothing of actual physical

use to people. A great deal of effort and resources must still be invested before the final product can be enjoyed. So too Torah learning is a major part of our lives that produces great joy, but without applying it to the physical world we are lacking the final product that it was intended for, a world filled with loving kindness, justice and purity.

The connections between the date and names of the Shavuot and the giving of the Torah are now clear, but why is it a celebration of the giving of the Torah if the whole Torah was not given to us on Shavuot? The Torah is never given, it always has to be acquired through effort and love. The Torah is never fully transmitted, there is always more to be learned. Finally at Mount Sinai on Shavuot the whole Nation of Israel heard the voice of G'd and this is the very essence of Torah, the wisdom that allows the whole Nation of Israel to hear the voice of G'd.

May we all merit to hear the small still voice that is always calling to us from Sinai!

Shabbat Shalom & Hag Shavuot Sameah

### SHABBAT SHALOM

**Start/Debut**      **End/Fin**  
**8:12 p.m.**      **9:27 p.m.**  
**SHAVUOT II**  
**SHABBAT SERVICES**  
**SHAHRIIT: 8:30A    MINHA: 8:30P**

#### WEEKLY SERVICES SCHEDULE

**Sunday**  
Shahrit: 8:30A    Minha: 6:00P  
**MONDAY - FRIDAY**  
Shahrit: 7:00A    Minha: 6:00P

#### CHEVRA SHAAS Service Schedule

**SHABBOS, May 27<sup>TH</sup>**  
Schachris 9:30 a.m.  
**SUNDAY, May 28<sup>TH</sup>**  
Schachris 8:00 a.m.

**TORAH CLASS**  
Join **ANDRE ROTCHEL** every  
Shabbat after services  
Beit Hamidrash  
Refreshments

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Daniel Benlolo:**  
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**Synagogue Office**  
will close on  
**Thursday, May 25 at 2:00P**  
and **Friday, May 26 for  
Shavuot**

**SPY**  
Spanish and Portuguese  
Youth

EVERY  
SHABBAT

**SHABBAT  
KIDS CLUB**  
AGES 3-11  
GARDERIE ORSHELI DAYCARE  
10:00 AM - 11:30 AM

PARASHA    STORIES  
GAMES    CRAFTS  
SONGS    PRIZES

Jewishness, something that resides in all Jewish hearts equally; a faith in G-d that transcends logic; a power that enables all Jews - through Torah - to equally grasp G-d's essence.

Torah is ultimately to be studied and learned with one's intellect. The purpose of Matan Torah is not only that G-d's Essence be revealed in Torah, but that the student so thoroughly unites himself with Torah that Torah becomes his very reason for existence.

When one understands something with one's own intellect, that concept becomes so thoroughly grasped that it becomes part and parcel of one's spiritual being, to the same degree that food becomes transformed into part of one's physical being.

This is the ultimate intent of Matan Torah: To allow man to grasp G-d Himself - a relationship that wholly transcends intellect - yet to concurrently possess the ability to assimilate the Torah's lessons and have them permeate the human intellect so that the individual becomes one with the Torah.

Shabbat shalom and Hag Shavuot Sameah.

### OPINION

## Shavuot Matan Torah

Reverend Hazan Daniel Benlolo

Dear Congregants and friends,

When in Ottawa, I gave a series of classes at the St Paul's University Theological department. The course gravitated towards the impact of Judaism in everyday life. This is part of a section on Shavuot.

The festival of Shavuot commemorates Matan Torah, G-d's giving of the Torah to the world. Since, as the Gemara (an essential component of the Talmud, comprising a collection of rabbinical analyses and commentaries on the Mishnah and presented in 63 books) informs us, "Our forefathers in Egypt never ceased studying Torah," the Jewish people evidently possessed Torah before it was formally given on Sinai. What, then, makes Matan Torah so unique?

The accomplishment of Matan Torah lies in the fact that "G-d gave us His Torah." Prior to Matan Torah, Torah was merely "taken" by man according to his inherently limited intellectual

capacity. When G-d gave the Torah, however, He gave it to us utterly and completely, in accordance with His infinite capacity.

Moreover, this was not simply a one-time event. Rather, at the time of Matan Torah G-d wholly "incorporated" Himself within the Torah. Thus, we find that regarding Torah G-d says: "I have written and placed [within Torah] My very 'Soul' and Essence"; whenever a person studies Torah, G-d says: "You are actually clutching Me."

This, then, was the novel aspect of G-d's revealing Himself in Torah: Matan Torah achieved something so new and distinct, that Torah as it existed prior to Matan Torah bore absolutely no comparison to Torah as given at Matan Torah:

As stated above, prior to Matan Torah, Torah study was limited to man's restricted intellect and capacities. Understandably, man's achievement in Torah was limited to what a finite being is capable of grasping of an infinite Being and infinite wisdom.

However, with the Giving of the Torah, Torah study brings a student not only to the comprehension of

Torah - which given the limitations of the human mind, must necessarily be limited - but to an infinite unity with the Giver of Torah Himself.

While differences existed between Jews in their degree of comprehension of Torah as it existed prior to Matan Torah, these differences - regarding Torah's essence - did not apply to Jews as they studied Torah as it existed after Matan Torah; the aspect of being able to fully grasp G-d is the same among all Jews who study Torah, whether it be the greatest scholar or the simplest Jew.

Matan Torah thus brought about not only an extraordinary degree of unity between the Jewish people and G-d, but also among the Jewish people themselves - they were all equal in their ability to "clutch" G-d.

This quality of Matan Torah was so potent that when the nation encamped opposite Mt. Sinai, even before the Torah was given, they did so "as one man with one heart."

For the fact that G-d was about to give the Torah to the Jewish people revealed within them the quintessential aspect of their

