



Bet Horaah

בית הוראה

Shaarei Ezra

שערי עזרא



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SHAVUOT MYTHS.

RABBI SHAY TAHAN

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There are many myths and mistakes regarding the great event of Matan Torah. Some of those myths were adopted from artists own renditions of this monumental event based on their own interpretations, whereas some are simply mistakes of people.

Here are some common mistakes about the Luchot that became accepted due to the famous drawings of the Luchot:

Mistake: A common way to draw the Luchot show them as the words of the Ten Commandments written on the Luchot or engraved on the surface. Secondly, it seems like the back of the Luchot had nothing on them, just a flat stone.

Reality: The words were engraved all the way from side to side in a way that there was nothing in the place that the letter was engraved.

There was a miracle that one was able to turn the Luchot to the other side, and instead of having the words backwards, they were able to be read regularly (רש"י הירש שמות לב, טו).

Moreover, the letters were actually able to be read from either of the four sides of the stones (רע"ב אבות פ"ה מ"ו).

Mistake: As Moshe was holding the stones one can clearly see that they were firm and hard.

Reality: A less-known miracle is that those stones were able to be rolled like a Sefer Torah and therefore it's very likely that Moshe had them scrolled rather than exposed (רע"ב אבות פ"ה מ"ו). This also seems to be the way the Radbaz (סימן תתפג) understood since he said that no one was able to see the letters on the Luchot.

Myth: We are all very familiar with the common pictures of the Luchot which all show only the

beginning of verse of each of the Ten Commandments, such as לא יהיה לך and אנכי ה', but are those really the only words that were written in the Luchot?

Reality: In the Luchot the entire verses of Ten Commandments were written. Besides the fact that this is obvious, we can also prove this from what Chazal said that the letters ך and ם were written in the Luchot in a miraculous way since they had a circle inside them which was not attached to anything but floating on the air. Now, only the later words in the verses had those two letters which clearly demonstrates that all the letters in complete were written.

Myth: The Luchot were rectangle and rounded on the top edges.

Reality: The Luchot were square on top with square edges. This we learn from the words of the Gemara (בבא בתרא יד, א) says that the stones had a length of six tefachim by six tefachim wide. The thickness was three tefachim. It is clear from this gemara that the Luchot were completely square.

Myth: The Luchot had five commandments on one tablet and five on the other.

Reality: Although that is the opinion of Rabbi Channah, but Chachamim (who were the majority and more accepted opinion) surprisingly held that the Ten Commandments were written on one side

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SHAVUOT MYTHS.

and again repeated on the other side.

"כיצד היו הלוחות כתובים רב חנינה (בן אחיה ר' יהודה) בן גמליאל אומר חמשה על לוח זה וחמשה על לוח זה, הה"ד: "ויכתבם על שני לוחות אבנים" - חמשה על לוח זה וחמשה על לוח זה. ורבנן אמרי עשרה על לוח זה ועשרה על לוח זה, הה"ד: "ויגד לכם את בריתו אשר צוה אתכם לעשות עשרת הדברים" - עשרה על לוח זה ועשרה על לוח זה" (ירושלמי שקלים יד).

It seems like the reason for the repetition was because the tablets were set as a contract between the nation and Hashem, and therefore each party receives a copy of the contract.

Rashi (שמות לד, א) tells us that the Luchot served as a Ketubah, which is a contract between a husband and his bride, here it was a contract between Hashem and the nation. There is also a third opinion of Rabbi Shimon Bar Yochai who held that there were twenty commandments on each tablet.

The explanation to his opinion could be since the letters on the Luchot were shown from four sides (as explained above) therefore it had to be repeated four times.

Possible Mistake: The Hebrew name for the Ten Commandments is עשרת הדברות. This is a problem for two reasons. One is that the words דבר - Commandment is masculine and

according to correct grammar the plural to that should be עשרת הדברים. Next is that the Torah itself calls them עשרת הדברים in couple of places.

"...ויכתב על הלחת את דברי הברית עשרת הדברים" (שמות לד, כ"ח)
"ויגד לכם את בריתו אשר צוה אתכם לעשות עשרת הדברים ויכתבם על שני לחות אבנים" (דברים ד, י"ג)
"ויכתב על הלחת כמכתב הראשון את עשרת הדברים אשר דבר ה' אליכם בהר מתוך האש ביום הקהל..." (שם י, ד')

The Mishna, too (תמיד ה, א), calls it עשרת הדברים.

On the other hand, it is not totally wrong, because the Gemara (עשרת הדברות) brings it in the more common way (ברכות יא, ב).

Mistake: Only the Ten Commandments were engraved on the Luchot.

Reality: Aside from the Ten Commandments, their explanations and interpretations were also engraved. The amount of writing contained within was surely a miracle of מעט המחזיק את המרובה

ירושלמי שקלים יד, במד"ר פי"ג פט"ז, שהש"ר ה"ד. דב"ז ח"ג ס' (תקמט)

STEERING THE RELATION-SHIP

There are two mindsets in the relationship between husbands and wives: one, is that each is there with his own needs, wishes and requirements, and the second is that each person is there in order to build a strong and lasting bond, and is ready to do whatever it takes to reach that goal.

In the first relationship things can go very well—as long as the two don't collide; but as soon as both parties clash, for example, if one wants to live in one place while the other wants to live elsewhere, then one must give in. Usually, the one who gives in is the one who is weaker. In such a relationship, the dominant partner usually gets his/her way all the time. In the second relationship, when the wishes collide, the partners try to work things out because their goal is not merely their own preference, but the relationship itself.

When we learn Megillat Ruth we see the contrast between those two relationships very clearly. The Megillah starts with the relationship of Elimelech and Naomi. Elimelech, according to Chazal, was a miserly person as he decided to abandon the poor people of his town at a time of need (רות רש"י א, א). Moreover, Chazal tell us that he was very controlling over his wife Naomi (רות רש"י א, ג). There is a second relationship which is introduced at the end of the Megillah, that of Boaz and Ruth. After Ruth had proved her righteousness, Boaz realizes that she is a G-d fearing person with very elevated qualities. After Ruth shows her interest in Boaz, he approaches her and tells her that he would do all it takes to build this new bond between them because he knows she will do the same. The beautiful words he used to assure her of that are recorded in

the Pasuk (רות ג, יא): "All that you'll request I'll do for you as everyone knows you are an Eshet Chayil". We all know

the definition of an Eshet Chayil since we say it every week on the Shabbat, it means a woman of valor, one who is selfless and does everything for her husband, children and others: אשת חיל מי ימצא?

A woman of valor who can find? For her price is far above rubies.



The heart of her husband safely trusts in her, and he has no lack of gain.

She does him good and not evil all the days of her life.

She seeks wool and flax and works willingly with her hands.

She is like the merchant ships; she brings her food from afar.

She also rises while it is yet night, and gives food to her household, and a portion to her maidens.

She considers a field, and buys it; with the fruit of her hands, she plants a vineyard.

She girds her loins with strength, and makes strong her arms.

She perceives that her merchandise is good; her lamp does not go out by night.

She lays her hands to the distaff, and her hands hold the spindle.

She stretches out her hand to the poor; she reaches forth her hands to the needy.

She is not afraid of the snow for her household; for all in her household are clothed with scarlet.

She makes for herself coverlets; her clothing is fine linen and purple.

Her husband is known in the gates, when he sits among the elders of the land.

She makes linen garments and sells them; and delivers

STEERING THE RELATION-SHIP

girdles unto the merchant.

Strength and dignity are her clothing; and she laughs at the time to come.

She opens her mouth with wisdom; and the law of kindness is on her tongue.

She looks well to the ways of her household, and eats not the bread of idleness.

Her children rise and call her blessed; her husband too, and he praises her:

Many daughters have done valiantly, but you rise above them all.

Grace is deceitful, and beauty is vain; but a woman that fears Hashem, she shall be praised. Give her of the fruit of her hands; and let her works praise her in the gates.

Boaz and Ruth were there to do anything to make their fresh relationship last. Let's observe the outcome of those two different relationships and decide which one we would like to strive to be in. Elimelech, who was controlling over his wife perished, and is remembered that way forever; while Boaz and Ruth had harmony and brought about a child who was the grandfather of King David that Mashich will come out from. One shouldn't ask what the relationship can do for him; rather one should ask what he can do for the relationship.

We should all merit to the Beracha that Boaz received on his wedding day (רות ד, יא): "May Hashem make the woman who is coming into your house like Rachel and Leah, both of whom built up the House of Israel!"

THE FASCINATING HISTORY OF THE HOLY LETTERS.

Taking a look at our Sifrei Torah, one can clearly see that the letters change from one shul to another, as we find different letters for Sephardim, who use Velish; Ashkenazim, who use the letters written in the Bet Yosef; Chasidim, who use the Ari; and Chabad who use the letters of the Shulchan Aruch Harav. There are also variations even within the above categories. For example, the Sephardim and Ashkenazim have various letters which change according to the country of origin they come from.

Are all Scripts Kosher?

כתב הרא"ש (כלל ג סי' יא): "צורת האותיות אינן שוות בכל המדינות, הרבה משונה כתב ארצנו מכתב הארץ הזאת, ואין פסול בשינוי הזה, רק שלא יעשה ההי"ן- חית"ן, כפי"ן- בית"ן, וכמו שמפרש בגמרא."

The Rosh writes that the shape of the letters in the Ashkenazi countries are very different than the shape of the Sephardi countries. Still, they are all kosher, unless the scribe wrote the letters in a way that disqualifies them, for example: the letter "ה" that was written resembling a "ח" and vice versa, or the letter "כ" that was written resembling the letter "ב".

כתב המאירי (קריית ספר ח"א מאמר שני): "אין האות נפסלת מצד עצמה אלא או שנפסדת צורתה לגמרי... והרי צורת האותיות משתנות ממחוז למחוז כגון מצרפת לספרד... והרי בהרבה מקומות מצינו קצת צורות באותיות שאין אנו רגילים בהם ואין אנו פוסלים ספר תורה בכך", ובחדושי לגמרא (שבת קד) כתב: "צורות האותיות משתנות קצתם בדיבור ובתלייה ובשאר צורות ממקום למקום- מצרפת לספרד וכן משאר מקומות, ואם כן עב"פ אתה פוסל בזה מה שאתה מכשיר בזה, אלא דברים אלו לא לפסול נאמרו כלל אלא ליישר הכתיבה".

The Meiri writes that minor changes in the letters don't invalidate them unless it completely changes its shape, as we see that the letters from France are different than those found in Spain, and they are all kosher. He adds that the details of the letters are meant to make the letters look nicer, but do not in any way to invalidate them.

Was the Torah Given in Lashon Hakodesh?

This question sounds funny, of course it was given in Lashon Hakodesh, what else? Was it given in Chinese?!

The truth is that this question is actually a matter of serious debate, as we learn from the following Gemara (בבבא, טז):

אב"ד הו"ו
ט"כ ל"מ ז"ס
פ"ק ר"ש
ב"ז פ"ר

First opinion: אמר מר זוטרא ואיתימא מר עוקבא בתחלה ניתנה תורה לישראל בכתב עברי ולשון הקודש חזרה וניתנה להם בימי עזרא בכתב אשורית ולשון ארמי ביררו להן לישראל כתב אשורית ולשון הקודש והניחו להדיוטות כתב עברית ולשון ארמי Initially, the Torah was given in *Ivrit* script (*Ivrit* is not Hebrew, rather it's a language of those who

were from across the river), and Lashon Hakodesh. Then it was given to them again in the days of Ezra in *Ashurit* script (the letters we have today in the Sifrei Torah) and the Aramaic tongue. The Jewish people selected for themselves the *Ashurit* script and Lashon Hakodesh and left the *Ivrit* script and the Aramaic tongue to the Kutim.

Second opinion: רבי אומר בתחלה בכתב זה ניתנה תורה לישראל כיון שחטאו נהפך להן לרועץ כיון שחזרו בהן החזירו להם שחטאו נהפך להן לרועץ כיון שחזרו בהן החזירו להם Rebbi says: Initially, the Torah was given to the Jewish people in the *Ashurit* script, which is in use today. Once the Jewish people sinned, it turned into an impairment for them, and they began writing with a different script. Once they repented, the first *Ashurit* script was returned to them.

The third opinion is that of Rabbi Eliezer Hamodayi, who holds that the letters never changed.

Based on the above first and second opinions, the Radbaz (סימן תתפג) explains that the Luchot, the tablets, were given in *Ashurit* which is the same script we have now, but since those letters are extremely holy, they were placed immediately in the Aron and were not shown or revealed to anyone except for the angels (מלאכי השרת) who taught them to Moshe Rabenu. Moshe then had permission to teach them only to Aharon and his son Elazar, and to Betsalel. The Radbaz

THE FASCINATING HISTORY OF THE HOLY LETTERS.

points out that even if the holy letters would be given to the people, they wouldn't be able to look at them due to the extreme Kedusha they had, as those holy letters Hashem used to create the world. The letters are so holy, that it was not permitted to even write the holy Torah with them(!) therefore, Moshe had to write the 12 Sefrei Torah in the Ivri language.

How did the changes happen?

It's clear that when the Torah was given to Moshe in Mount Sinai, there was only one way that the letters of Torah were written. How then is it possible that there are few different ways to write the letters?

There are couple of answers to this question.

ספר אוצר הכבוד חגיגה סוף פ"א הובא בהקדמת (Rabbi Todeus Halevi) writes that the Sofrim of the earlier generations wanted to beautify the look of the letters and therefore added to and changed the letters on their own. By doing that, the letters were slightly changed from the way they were received in Har Sinai.

Sefer Baruch Sheamar (in the introduction), the main book that the Safrut leans on, writes that since the Jewish Nation was exiled from one country to another with continuous persecution, the letters were somewhat forgotten from the Sofrim in their original shapes.

סעודת שבועות

לזמן ממושך של שש שעות, ולכן אין ראוי לאכול אז דברי בשר. ואם כן יש לדון לגבי הגבינות שנמכרות בימינו, שלפי הטעם שהגבינות נחשבות כמתולעות, ברור שהגבינות שנמכרות היום אינם מתולעות כלל, וכן רוב הגבינות אינם ישנות אלא נמכרות טריות מיד אחר עשייתן. אולם גם אם ישנם גבינות ששוהות זמן רב שכזה רבו הפוסקים הסוברים שאין צורך לחייב את האוכלים לחכות שש שעות, שכן יש

חילוק בין הגבינות הישנות המוזכרות בספרים דלעיל שגבינות אלו היו מושכות טעם מחמת התישנותם, לגבינות שבימינו שאינם מושכות טעם. וכהנה חילקו הרבה פוסקים בין גבינה צהובה המצויה כיום (ר"מ פינשטיין, חזו"א ומשנה הלכות הובאו בדבריו סי' תצד הערה 20) אף שגם בה יש מחמירים.

זאת ועוד שהסביר הגאון הרב ישראל בעלסקי (שלחן הלי עמוד קצט) שאין שום טעם להחמיר בגבינות המצויות היום מכיון שנוהגים לארזם למכירה בצורה הרמטית ולכן טריותם נשמרת לאורך זמן.

ופשוט הדבר שהטעם של התישנות הוא לא דבר שרירותי ללא טעם, אלא שהסיבה היא כיון שגבינה שכזו מתיבשת ומתקשה ולכן טעמה נמשך אחר האכילה לזמן רב, אולם בגבינות של ימינו שסגורות בעטיפת ניילון עמידות ודאי שהעטיפה שומרת על טריות הגבינה ואין בה משום משיכת טעם אל תוך הפה.

ולגבי שאלתכם אם יש לברך ברכת המזון בין אכילת הסעודה החלבית לסעודה הבשרית, כתב המשנה ברורה (סימן תצד ס"ק טז) שאין צריך להפסיק בברכת המזון רק יחליפו את מפת השלחן ואת המאכלים ויקפידו לקנח ולהדיח את הפה. בברכת חג שבועות שמח.



בשבועות אנו נוהגים לאכול מאכלי חלב וסוגי גבינות שונות ואחר כך אנו מסירים את כל המאכלים מן השלחן ומגישים סעודה בשרית. ויש לנו שני שאלות, אחת האם עלינו להמתין בין אכילת הגבינות לאכילת הסעודה הבשרית, והשנית האם עלינו לברך ברכת המזון בין שני הסעודות.

שלום לכם.

בענין אכילת מאכלים בשריים אחר אכילת גבינה מצאנו מחלוקת בין ספרדים לאשכנזים, שלדעת השלחן ערוך (יו"ד סימן פט ס"א) אין צריך להמתין אחר אכילת מאכלי חלב וגבינה לסעודת בשר, וכן פסקו רבותינו הספרדים (עיין בהליכות עולם ח"ז עמוד מד). ולדעה זו מספיק בקינוח הפה בלעיסת לחם או מאכל אחר, ושטיפת הפה במים או משקים אחרים, וכן צריך רחיצת ידים. (וראה מה כתב בזה הבן איש חי פרשת שלח לך, אות טו במנהג העיר בגדד). אולם

הרמ"א כתב שטוב להחמיר ולא לאכול בשר אחר אכילת גבינה קשה כמו שלא אוכלים מאכלים חלביים אחר אכילת בשר, דהיינו שש שעות וכן נהגו האשכנזים.

והנה דנו הפוסקים מה נחשב כגבינה קשה שיש להמתין אחריה, שלדעת הט"ז (סק"ד) היינו גבינה שיש בה הרבה תולעים (נראה שהתולעים מוצצות את כל הלחות ומיבשות את הגבינה לחלוטין) או שעברו עליה ששה חדשים, וגם הש"ך (ס"ק טו) כתב שגבינה קשה היא גבינה שעברו עליה ששה חדשים, והסיבה להמתנה זו היא מכיון שהאוכל גבינה כזו מרגיש את טעם הגבינה יוצא מתוך גרונו

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IN HONOR OF OUR DEAREST FRIEND MR SHIMON RAKHAMINOV FROM BET-JUHURO. WE WOULD LIKE TO THANK HARAV YOSEF COHEN SHLITA FOR DISTRIBUTING OUR NEWSLETTERS IN PASSAIC, NJ. MAY HASHEM BLESS HIM WITH ALL THE BERACHOT OF THE TORAH. THANK YOU FOR THE CHASHUV RABBIS FOR HELPING WITH THE DISTRIBUTION OF OUR NEWSLETTER: RABBI BEN TZION KOKIS RABBI DOVID RIBIAT RABBI AKIVA TENDLER