

The Date of Shavuot?

1. Vayikra 23:15-17

וספרתם לכם ממחרת השבת, מיום הביאכם את-עמר התנופה: שבע שבבות; תמימת תהינה. עד ממחרת השבת השביעת תספרו, חמשים יום; והקרבתם מנחה חדשה לה'. ממושבתיכם תביאו להם תנופה, שתי עשרנים--סלת תהינה, חמץ תאפינה, בפורים לה'.
 You shall count for yourselves from the day after Shabbat, from the day when you bring the *omer* of the waving: seven Shabbatot; they shall be complete. Until the day after the seventh Shabbat you shall count, fifty days; and you shall offer a new meal offering [of two loaves] to G-d. From your dwelling places you shall bring bread that shall be waved, two [loaves] made of two tenths [of an *ephah*]; they shall be of fine flour, [and] they shall be baked leavened, the first offering to Hashem.

2. Devarim 16:9-11

שבעה שבועות תספר-לה; מהחל חרמש בקמה, תחל לספר שבעה שבועות. ועשית חג שבועות לה' אלקיך--מסת נדבת ידך אשר תתן כאשר יברכה ה' אלקיך. ושמחת לפני ה' אלקיך...
 You shall count seven weeks for yourselves; from when the sickle is first put to the standing crop, shall you begin counting seven weeks. Then you shall observe the Festival of Weeks [*Shavuot*] for Hashem your G-d; the voluntary offerings that you give should be commensurate with how much Hashem your G-d will have blessed you. You shall rejoice before Hashem your G-d.

The Sages vs. the Heretics

3. Talmud, Menachot 65a (Koren translation)

בייתוסין אומרים: עצרת אחר השבת.

The Boethusians would say [that the festival of] *Shavuot* [always occurs] after Shabbat [on a Sunday].

4. Talmud, Menachot 65a (Koren translation)

ניטפל להם רבן יוחנן בן זכאי ואמר להם: שוטים, מנין לכם? ולא היה אדם אחד שהיה משיבו, חוץ מזקן אחד שהיה מפטפט כנגדו ואמר: משה רבינו אוהב ישראל היה, ויודע שעצרת יום אחד הוא, עמד ותקנה אחר שבת כדי שיהו ישראל מתענגין שני ימים.
 Rabban Yohanan ben Zakkai joined [the discussion with the Boethusians] and said to them: Fools! From where have you derived this? And there was no man who answered him, except for one elderly man who was prattling [*mefatpet*] at him, and he said: Moses, our teacher, was a lover of the Jewish people and he knew that *Shavuot* is only one day. Therefore, he arose and established it after Shabbat, in order that the Jewish people would enjoy themselves for two days.

5. Talmud, Menachot 65b (Koren translation)

אם משה רבינו אוהב ישראל היה, למה איחרן במדבר ארבעים שנה? אמר לו: רבי, בכך אתה פוטרני? אמר לו: שוטה, ולא תהא תורה שלמה שלנו כשיחה בטילה שלכם!

And if Moses, our teacher, was a lover of the Jewish people, why did he delay them in the wilderness forty years? [The elderly man] said to him: My teacher, you dismiss me with this retort? [Rabbi Yohanan ben Zakkai] said to him: Fool! And will our perfect Torah not be as worthy as your frivolous speech?

6. Talmud, Menachot 66a (Koren translation)

ועוד, נאמרה "שבת" למטה, ונאמרה "שבת" למעלה. מה להלן רגל ותחילת רגל, אף כאן רגל ותחילת רגל.
 Rabbi Yosei cites another proof: **And furthermore**, it is **stated "shabbat" below**, with regard to the festival of *Shavuot* (Leviticus 23:16), **and it is also stated "shabbat" above** (Leviticus 23:15), with regard to starting the counting of the *omer*. **Just as below**, with regard to the **festival** of *Shavuot*, it is stated: "Even until the morrow after the seventh week [*shabbat*] you shall number fifty days," **and** the word *shabbat* is referring to a time at the **beginning of the Festival**; **so too here**, with regard to the bringing of *omer*, the word *shabbat* means **Festival**, and the counting starts **near the beginning of the Festival**, on the second day of Passover.

7. Talmud, Menachot 66a (Koren translation)

רבי שמעון בן אלעזר אומר, כתוב אחד אומר: "שֵׁשֶׁת יָמִים תֹּאכְלֵם מַצּוֹת", וכתוב אחד אומר: "שִׁבְעַת יָמִים מַצּוֹת תֹּאכְלֵם", הא כיצד? מצה שאי אתה יכול לאוכלה שבעה מן החדש, אתה יכול לאוכלה ששה מן החדש.

Rabbi Shimon ben Elazar says there is yet another proof: One verse states: "Six days you shall eat unleavened bread" (Deuteronomy 16:8), and one verse states: "Seven days you shall eat unleavened bread" (Exodus 12:15). How can these texts be reconciled? Rabbi Shimon ben Elazar explains that there is *matza* that you are unable to eat for all seven days of Passover, due to the prohibition of harvesting and eating from the new crop of grain that ripened before Passover until after the *omer* offering. But you are able to eat that same *matza* for six days, although it is from the new crop, as it is permitted after the bringing of the *omer* offering on the second day of Passover. This resolution of the verses is possible only if the *omer* offering is brought on the sixteenth of Nisan, not on any other date.

The Date of Matan Torah? ([click here for chart](#))

8. Shemot 19:1, 10-11 (Judaica Press translation)

בַּחֹדֶשׁ הַשְּׁלִישִׁי לְצֵאת בְּנֵי-יִשְׂרָאֵל מֵאֶרֶץ מִצְרָיִם--בַּיּוֹם הַזֶּה בָּאוּ מִדְּבַר סִינַי... וַיֹּאמֶר ה' אֶל-מֹשֶׁה "לֶךְ אֶל-הָעָם, וְקִדְשְׁתֶּם הַיּוֹם וּמָחָר; וְכַבְּסוּ שְׂמֹלֹתֵם. וְהָיוּ נֹכְנָיִם לַיּוֹם הַשְּׁלִישִׁי, כִּי בַיּוֹם הַשְּׁלִישִׁי יֵרֵד ה' לְעֵינֵי כָל-הָעָם--עַל-הַר סִינַי."

In the third month of the children of Israel's departure from Egypt, on this day they arrived in the desert of Sinai... And Hashem said to Moses, "Go to the people and prepare them today and tomorrow, and they shall wash their garments. And they shall be prepared for the third day, for on the third day, Hashem will descend before the eyes of all the people upon Mount Sinai."

9. Talmud, Shabbat 86b (Koren translation)

- תנו רבנן: בששעי בחודש ניתנו עשרת הדברות לישראל.
- רבי יוסי אומר: בשבעה בו.
- The **Sages** taught: On the **sixth** day of the month [**of Sivan**], the Ten Commandments were given to the Jewish people.
- **Rabbi Yosei** says: On the **seventh** day of the month.

10. Talmud, Shabbat 86b (Koren translation)

אמר רבא: דכולי עלמא בראש חודש אתו למדבר סיני. פתיב הקא: "ביום הזה באו מדבר סיני", ופתיב הקא: "החודש הזה לכם ראש חודשים" — מה להלן ראש חודש, אף פאן ראש חודש. ודכולי עלמא, בשבת ניתנה תורה לישראל.

Rava said: Everyone agrees that the Jews came to the Sinai desert on Rosh Chodesh, as it is written here: "In the third month after the children of Israel were gone forth out of the land of Egypt, the same day came they into the wilderness of Sinai" (Exodus 19:1), without elaborating what day it was. And it is written there: "This month shall be to you the beginning of months; it shall be the first month of the year to you" (Exodus 12:2). Just as there, the term "this" is referring to Rosh Chodesh, so too, here the term is referring to Rosh Chodesh. And similarly, everyone agrees that the Torah was given to the Jewish people on Shabbat...

11. Talmud, Shabbat 86b-87a (Koren translation)

כי פליגי בקביעא דירקא: רבי יוסי סבר — בחד בשבא איקבע ירחא, ובחד בשבא לא אמר להו ולא מידי משום חולשא דאורקא; בתרי בשבא אמר להו: "ואתם תהיו לי ממלכת כהנים"; בתלתא אמר להו מצנת הגבלה; בארבעה עבוד פרישה.

Where Rabbi Yosei and the Sages disagree is with regard to the determination of the month, meaning which day of the week was established as Rosh Chodesh:

Rabbi Yosei held: Rosh Chodesh was established on the first day of the week, and on the first day of the week He did not say anything to them due to the weariness caused by the journey. On the second day of the week, He said to them: "And you shall be to Me a kingdom of priests and a holy nation; these are the words that you shall speak to the children of Israel" (Exodus 19:6). On the third day of the week, G-d said to them the mitzva of setting boundaries around Mount Sinai. On the fourth day of the week, the husbands and wives separated from one another.

ורבנו סברי — בתרי בשבא איקבע ירחא, בתרי בשבא לא אמר להו וְלֹא מִיַּדִּי מְשׁוּם חוֹלְשָׁא דְאַוְרְחָא; בתְּלֵתָא אָמַר לְהוּ: "וְאַתֶּם תְּהִיּוּ לִי"; בְּאַרְבַּעָה אָמַר לְהוּ מְצֻנֹת הַגְּבֻלָּה; בְּחַמְשָׁא עֲבוּד פְּרִישָׁה.

And the **Rabbis** hold: On the **second day of the week**, **Rosh Chodesh** was established, and on the **second day of the week** G-d did not say anything to them due to the weariness caused by their journey. On the **third day of the week**, G-d said to them: "And you shall be to Me a kingdom of priests and a holy nation; these are the words that you shall speak to the children of Israel" (Exodus 19:6). On the **fourth day of the week**, G-d said to them the **mitzva of setting boundaries** around Mount Sinai. On the **fifth day of the week**, the husbands and wives **separated** from one another.

12. Talmud, Shabbat 87a (Koren translation)

מִיתִיבִי: "וְקִדְשְׁתֶּם הַיּוֹם וּמָחָר", קִשְׁיָא לְרַבִּי יוֹסֵי! אָמַר לֵה רַבִּי יוֹסֵי: יוֹם אֶחָד הוֹסִיף מִלְּשָׁה מְדַעְתּוֹ.

The Gemara raises an objection: Doesn't the verse state: "And the Lord said to Moses: Go to the people **and sanctify them today and tomorrow** and let them wash their garments" (Exodus 19:10), indicating that the husbands and wives were separated for only two days? This is **difficult** according to the opinion of **Rabbi Yosei**, who said earlier that the separation was for three days. The Gemara answers: **Rabbi Yosei** could have said to you: **Moses added one day** to the number of days that G-d commanded based on his own perception.

Emphasizing the Oral Law

13. Rabbi Avraham Gombiner, Magen Avraham, Orach Chaim 494:1 (modified Motechin translation)

קִשָּׁה לִי: הֵיאֵךְ אֲנִי אוֹמְרִים בְּשִׁבְעוֹת יוֹם מֵתָן תּוֹרַתְנוּ? הֲלֹא קִ"ל כַּר"י דָּאֵמַר בּו' בְּסִיּוֹן נִתְּנָה תּוֹרָה? דְּהָא קִ"ל דְּבַעֵי לְפָרוּשֵׁי ו' עוֹנוֹת כַּמ"ש בִּי"ד סִי' קצ"ו? ... וְלִדְיָדָן לְעוֹלָם שִׁבְעוֹת בּו' בְּסִיּוֹן! ... וּמָה שֶׁקִּשָּׁה עוֹד דֵּהתורה נִיתְּנָה בְּיוֹם ג' לְסַפִּיר! דְּהָא יֵצְאוּ מִמִּצְרַיִם בְּיוֹם ה' וְהַתּוֹרָה נִיתְּנָה בְּשַׁבָּת. כִּבְר תִּי' הִי"מ דְּבָא לְרִמּוּז לְנוּ י"ט שְׁנֵי שָׁל גְּלוּיָת, וְאִפְשֵׁר דֵּהֵינּוּ דְקָאֵמַר יוֹם א' הוֹסִיף מִשָּׁה מְדַעְתּוֹ, וְאִין כָּאֵן מְקוּמוֹ...

It is difficult for me [to understand]: How can we say on Shavuot that it is "the day of the giving of our Torah"? Do we not conclude like R. Yosei (Shabbat 86b-87a) that the Torah was given on the 7th of Sivan? After all, we do conclude [that separation between husband and wife in regard to certain laws of ritual impurity] requires six half-days, as is written in Yoreh Deah 196... But in our calendar, Shavuot is always on the 6th of Sivan! ... A further difficulty is that the Torah was given on the **51st** day of their counting! For they left Egypt on the fifth day of the week and the Torah was given on Shabbat. In this regard, [the book] *HaAsarah Maamarot* already answered that it is meant to hint to the Second Day of Yom Tov of the Exiles. In fact, it's possible that that's the reason why Moshe added a day of his own accord, but this isn't the place to discuss it...

The Count is What Counts!

14. Sefer HaChinuch, Mitzvah 306 (Sefaria translation)

וּמִפְנֵי כֵן, כִּי הֵיאֵךְ כָּל עַקְרָן שֶׁל יִשְׂרָאֵל וּבַעֲבוּרָה נִגְאָלוּ וְעָלוּ לְכָל הַגְּדוּלָּה שֶׁעָלוּ אֵלֶיהָ, נִצְטוּיָנוּ לְמִנּוֹת מִמְחַרְתּוֹ יוֹם טוֹב שֶׁל פֶּסַח עַד יוֹם נִתְּנָה הַתּוֹרָה, לְהִרְאוֹת בְּנַפְשֵׁינוּ הַחֲפִץ הַגְּדוֹל אֶל הַיּוֹם הַנִּכְבָּד לְלִבֵּינוּ, כְּעַבְד יִשְׂאָף צֶל וַיִּמְנָה תְּמִיד מֵתִי יְבוֹא הַעֵת הַנִּכְסָף אֵלָיו שִׁיֵּצֵא לְחֵרוֹת, כִּי הַמְנִין מֵרָאָה לְאָדָם כִּי כָל יִשְׁעוֹ וְכָל חֲפָצוֹ לְהַגִּיעַ אֶל הַזְּמַן הַהוּא.

And because of this - that it is [the] essence of Israel, and because of it were they redeemed and went up to all of the greatness to which they rose - we were commanded to tally from the morrow of the holiday of Pesach until the day of the giving of the Torah; to show about ourselves the great desire [we have] for the honored day, which our hearts yearn [for] like 'a slave seeks shade' and always tallies when will come the yearned time that he goes out to freedom. As the tally shows about a man that all of his deliverance and all of his desire is to reach that time.

Matan Torah Doesn't Have a Date!

15. Rabbi Shlomo Ephraim Luntchitz, Kli Yakar to Vayikra 23:16 (NLE translation)

וּמָה שְׁלֹא נִזְכַּר בַּתּוֹרָה בְּפִירוּשׁוֹ כִּי יוֹם זֶה מֵתָן תּוֹרָה... שֶׁעַל מֵתָן תּוֹרָה ה' לֹא רָצָה ה' לְהַגְבִּיל יוֹם יְדוּעַ לְפִי שְׁצָרִיךְ הָאָדָם שִׁיְהִיָּה דוּמָה לוֹ בְּכָל יוֹם וַיּוֹם מְכַל יָמוֹת הַשָּׁנָה כְּאִילוֹ בְּאוֹתוֹ יוֹם קְבֻלָּה מֵהָרַם סִינִי... וְעַל כֵּן אָמְרוּ רַז"ל (סְפָרִי וְאַתְחַנֵּן ו') שִׁיְהִי דְבַרִּי תּוֹרָה חֲדָשִׁים עֲלֶיךָ וְלֹא כְּדָבָר הַיִּשָּׁן שֶׁלְּבוֹ שֶׁל אָדָם קִץ בּוּ.

The reason that the Torah does not explicitly mention that this is the day of the Giving of the Torah... G-d did not want to limit the Giving of the Torah to a single day because a person should feel every single day of the year as if he received the Torah from Mount Sinai on that day... Similarly, the Sages have said that the words of Torah should be new to a person every day, not like something old which he can no longer tolerate.

שהרי באמת אתה מוצא בה דבר חידוש בכל יום ויום, ועל כן אין יום נתינתה מבואר בתורה יותר ממה שנרמז בהבאת מנחה חדשה, להורות שהתורה מנחה חדשה בכל יום ויום.

The truth is that one does indeed find something new in the Torah every day. Therefore, the Torah did not specify the day that it was given, apart from the hint in the word “new,” to teach that the Torah is like a new offering every day.

16. Blessing Upon Torah Study

ברוך אתה ה' אלקינו מלך העולם אשר בחר בנו מכל העמים ונתן לנו את-תורתו: ברוך אתה ה' נותן התורה.

Blessed are You, Hashem our G-d, King of the universe, Who chose us from all the peoples, and gave us His Torah. Blessed are You, Hashem, Giver of the Torah.