Jewish Tribune – Shavuos

**A Royal Gift**

The Platinum Jubilee is the talk of the moment. Imagine the royal motorcade is driving down Golders Green road. To your utter dismay and delight, her majesty’s Bentley state limousine pulls up next to Grodz, just a few feet away from you. The driver emerges and asks you what you recommend from the recently re-opened iconic shop. You rattle off your favourites and whilst he is inside shopping, you pluck up the courage to knock on the tinted window of the back seat.

You can’t believe it. Her majesty lowers the window, and you engage her in conversation. After a delightful few minutes, the driver emerges and is ready to set off. Before he does, you ask the Queen for a memento of the occasion and she kindly gifts you a royal handkerchief.

You treasure this gift and it takes pride of place in your display cabinet.

Now imagine a different type of gift. It is a special anniversary, and a husband presents his wife with some expensive jewellery. This gift is also treasured and is worn with pride and love.

What is the difference between the two gifts?

Another question. What is the difference between Shavuos and Simchas Torah? Don’t both days celebrate Torah? What is the difference between the two?

I once saw an answer in the name of Rav Simcha Zissel Broide ztl, the Rosh Yeshiva of Chevron. There are two types of gift. One has intrinsic value and one has minimal monetary value but is precious because it is received from someone special.

Expensive jewellery has intrinsic value but her majesty’s handkerchief has a different type of value.

L’havdil, on Simchas Torah we celebrate the Giver of Torah and our relationship with HKBH. On Shavuos we celebrate the actual value of Torah.

This explains many themes and sayings of Chazal that relate to each of the two yomim tovim. For example, in Parshas Emor, when describing the day after Succos, Rashi cites the famous saying:

בני בבקשה מכם, עכבו עמי עוד יום אחד, קשה עלי פרידתכם

My sons, please stay with me just one more day, it is difficult for me to part with you

This is a reflection of our relationship with Hashem.

But on Shavuos, the focus is more on the gift of Torah and its intrinsic and inestimable value.

The Ishbitzer connects this with a famous ruling of the **הגהות אשרי**. Reuven bought a piece of metal thinking it was lead and sold it to Shimon. Shimon thought it was lead and paid for the going price of lead. It turned out it was silver. Reuven sued Shimon, demanding the full price of silver. The **הגהות אשרי** paskened that Shimon is exempt and does not have to pay as Reuven never had a kinyan (acquisition) in silver because he never realised he had silver. The Ishbitzer explains that if a person does not appreciate what he has, he does not actually have it! So too, if a person doesn’t appreciate what Torah is, he cannot have a full acquisition of it.

We have just seen the sad passing of Rabbi Pinchos Roberts ztl. His very essence reflected Torah. His hasmoda was legendary. Many of us remember the light on in the front room of 41 Sinclair Grove burning strong very late at night, day after day, week after week, year after year. This was someone who appreciated the gift of Torah.

As we renew our commitment to Torah once again, let us continue and live by his legacy and bolster our appreciation of the gift that we received on Shavuos.

Wishing you all a wonderful Shabbos and Yom Tov.

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