

**There is a well-known question that the Mogen Avraham (Rabbi Avrohom Gombiner) in his commentary on the Shulchan Aruch to the laws of Shavuot poses. The Talmud in tractate Shabbat discusses whether the Torah was given on the 6th or 7th day of Sivan. Although, in reading the Gemara there does not appear to be a definitive ruling, the Mogen Avraham is quite certain from other sources that the ruling clearly follows the opinion of Rav Yose that the Torah was given on the 7th day of Sivan. Therefore, asks the Mogen Avraham, why is the holiday of Shavuot celebrated beginning on the 6th day (this coming Saturday evening)? We should wait until Sunday evening and only begin its celebration on the seventh day. Furthermore, in all of our liturgy for the festival, we describe the holiday as zman matan Torateinu, the time of the giving of the Torah, but this is incorrect. How can we recite these words on the sixth day when in fact they are not true, for the Torah was only given on the following day?**

**The Gerrer Rebbe suggests a meaningful and poignant approach from the great Chassidic master, Rav Bunim of Peshichsa. Rav Bunim asks that the language of Matan Torah is in fact rather strange considering that the opening Mishnah on Prikei Avot (Ethics of the Fathers) teaches us that Moshe received the Torah from Mt. Sinai. The verb used is m'kabel, received, rather than matan, gifted, if so, why does our Shavuot liturgy include the phrase zman matan torateinu, and not zman kabbalat torateinu.**

**Rav Bunim explains that kabbalah, receiving something does not usually have a specific time set aside for it because it does not require any preparation or effort to simply be on the receiving end of something. Therefore it would be impossible to call Shavuot, Zman Kabbalat Torateinu. However, the celebration of Shavuot is not about receiving something, it is about participating and playing in an active role in something. We did not simply receive the Torah, instead we actively prepared ourselves to be granted a right and a privilege to create our very own link in the chain of Torah scholarship. This of course requires supreme effort and persistent dedication. Without those aforementioned prerequisites, one would have no right to partake in Torah innovation and Rabbinic ingenuity. It is the completion of our preparation and our readiness to receive the Torah that we celebrate on Shavuot and that is what we refer to as Zman Matan Torateinu.**

**I feel bad for our brethren in Israel who will only celebrate one day of Shavuot, because there really is a necessity to celebrate both days of Shavuot. Only us diaspora Jews will celebrate the seventh day of Sivan, the second day of the Holiday, which is the actual day of Kabbalas Hatorah, our receiving the Torah. However, at least the day that the Jews all across the world will celebrate, the 6th day of Sivan will be the raison d'être of the Holiday. For even though we did not actually receive anything on that day, yet we celebrate our personal growth, our spiritual evolution, and our utter readiness to receive the Torah the very next day.**

**The true joy of Shavuot is not what we received, but what we accomplished. It is therefore not enough to observe the holiday of Shavuot, but once must participate in it. It is our annual opportunity to rededicate ourselves to our own Torah study, to rediscover our passion and excitement for Torah study and most importantly to commit ourselves to being an active and committed member of the Jewish nation.**

**Wishing everyone a joyous and meaningful Shavuot  
Shabbat Shalom  
Chag Sameach,**

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