

Torah Unfettered

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The Rambam (*Hilchos Yesodei haTorah, perek 8*) designates the revelation at Sinai as the ultimate perception of G-d and the absolute cornerstone of our faith. It is obvious that this revelation was a result of it being the occasion for the giving of the Torah, as the truth of Torah rests on this very event.

However, if this is indeed the momentous event in *Klal Yisroel's* history, we are puzzled greatly. Why has the place where this happened been totally lost to us, and there never was any point made in marking it at all [whereas the crossing into *Eretz Yisroel* was marked by erecting stones]? Why is this place not at all sacred today, while the place of the *akeidah* is the most sacred of all places? Shouldn't the place where Torah was given remain eternally sacred, as the Torah itself is?

Furthermore, the exact date on the calendar of *mattan* Torah is also unclear; it could be the sixth or seventh of Sivan. Pesach is as exact as can be, while Shavous is a bit murky!? Not only is the date of the giving of the Torah unclear, but the Torah never even mentioned it as the reason for celebrating Shavous! We have to put the pieces together ourselves and connect it.

There is another curious distinction, and that is that the Jewish nation has three "royalties": Monarchy, Priesthood, and Torah. The first two are fixed as regards to the tribe that it is attributed to, in addition to the fact that succession of the child of a monarch or *kohein gadol* is seen as optimal [and obviously, a *kohein's* son is a *kohein*]. Regarding Torah, neither of the two is true; no tribe is meant to have a monopoly on it, nor is progeny succession automatic (see *Nedarim* 81a.)

We see a perplexing pattern, where Torah, our most sacred possession seems to have the smallest "footprint".

It would therefore appear that our very reasoning is wrong. It is not despite, but **because** Torah is our ultimate spiritual gift, that it does not have a real physical imprint. The world of *mitzvos* has a physical context, and therefore it is somewhat limited. It has a time, a place, or an object that serves as its context. Torah, because it is completely spiritual, does not tie itself to any particular time, place or person. It happened to have been given on a particular spot, but that spot does not become its "location". So too regarding the time when it was given, and no person ties Torah down to his family.

This concept can perhaps be broadened to offer some perspective on the turmoil of the last two years. We seem to deal well with *ruchniyas* when there is a fixed schedule, everything is on track, and there are no surprises. *Baruch* Hashem we can feel some pride in how well things functioned all these years. But our world turning topsy turvy has greatly weakened our *ruchniyas*. Shuls are struggling to regain *mispallim*, shiurim their students, and serious issues of *bein adam lachaveiro* plague us. This has been a test for us in seeing how strongly our "*ruchniyas*" world is tied to its physical mooring. If our performance demands a routine to keep it going, then it is tied a lot more to the physical than we are comfortable admitting.

Let us remember, Torah was given in a desert, a place with no fixed coordinates. The *dvar* Hashem exists in its own right and is not dependent on time, place or person.