

Dvar Torah by **Rabbi Chanoch Yeres**

to his community at

Beit Knesset Beit Yisrael, Yemin Moshe

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SHAVUOT

On Shavuot, we celebrate our receiving of the Torah and we take pride in the way we accepted it. Our unconditional proclamation of "we will obey, and we will listen (understand)", is still a source of pride and merit for us throughout the generations.

What was so special about this declaration?

The Talmud in Tractate Shabbat states that every Jew was awarded two crowns for announcing "we will obey" before "we will listen". If the simple explanation is that they were willing to accept Mitzvot before knowing their details, then we are still lacking the reason why they received two crowns instead of just one.

Rabbi M. Silverstein offers the answer of the Beit HaLevi, who explains the context of the wording. By exclaiming "we will learn" after "we will do", the Israelites showed an understanding of the dual nature of learning Torah. Surely, one must study the Mitzvot before one can

follow them. However, by claiming "we will obey" beforehand, they accepted an additional message of studying the Torah, which is learning Torah just for its own sake. These two aspects of the Torah merited two crowns to the Israelites.

This idea also can explain a contradiction in the Talmud. The Talmud in Megila says that Moshe instituted a practice to learn the laws of a Holiday, on the day of the Holiday itself. Yet, in Talmud Pesachim, the practice is to learn the Holiday laws, thirty days prior to the Holiday. One can now understand the Beit HaLevi's explanation. The learning thirty days prior to the Holiday, ensures our understanding for the proper performance of Mitzvot on the Holiday. Continuing to learn about the Holiday, on the Holiday itself, especially, after performing its Mitzvot already, demonstrates that our learning is for the inherent value to study on its own right and not just to know procedures.

To re-acquire these two crowns, lost due to the Golden Calf, we must renew our commitment this Shavuot to accept both levels of learning the Torah. May our learning this Shavuot enable us to return to that level. 🏠