



# Ohr Somayach Light Lines

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## Light Insight

### *For Keep's Sake*

When you think of man's first landing on the moon, the picture that probably comes to your mind is that of Edward 'Buzz' Aldrin with his arms slightly lifted from the sides of his body by the bulk of his space suit. Distorted by the curvature of his helmet's visor is a reflection of the photographer, Neil Armstrong. In front of him are a few footprints that represent a 'giant leap.' Behind him the blackness of space.

Whenever we want to remember something, to have a reminder of a landmark event in our lives, we take pictures to immortalize the experience. Be it a wedding or a trip down the Riviera, we make mementos of these moments. And by making these mementos, we fix these events in the map of our lives, and they become like signposts.

Signposts that tell us where we have been, and help us to clarify where we are supposed to be going.

When the Jewish People left Mount Sinai after the giving of the Torah, they did it in a way which was flawed. The Torah says that "*they traveled from Mount Sinai the way of three days.*" The commentators explain that they traveled "the way of three days" in one day, or that they traveled from Mount Sinai with joy, like a child running out of school. They left in a hurry.

What was so flawed about their rushed departure? After all, a person is supposed to run to do a *mitzva*, and they were 'running' to the Land of Israel where many of the *mitzvot* awaited them. Weren't they merely fulfilling the command to do *mitzvot* with alacrity?

Furthermore, in this week's *parsha*, the Torah itself teaches us that, "*According to the word of G-d the Children of Israel*

*traveled, and according to the word of G-d, they camped.*" If it was G-d who commanded them to leave Mount Sinai, what was their failing?

The flaw was not in their actions, but in their feelings.

When something special happens in life, we want a memento to immortalize the moment. We linger to take a mental photo and imprint the event forever on our memories. The Jewish People, despite wanting to journey as quickly as possible to the Land of Israel, should have left Mount Sinai, the site of the giving of the Torah, with mixed feelings, with a little hint of melancholy that they were leaving the site of such a monumental event. For at Mount Sinai the Torah was given to mankind, and the Jewish People were given their national identity as the 'Light unto the Nations.'

They should have wanted, as it were, to have 'a photograph' — an emotional keepsake — of this, mankind's greatest giant leap.

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## Response Line

S. Z. Jessel wrote:

*Dear Rabbi,  
According to Jewish Law, can  
you go 65 miles per hour in a 55  
mph zone?*

Dear S. Z.,

I posed your question to a  
*halachic* authority in Jerusalem, who

said that 'speeding' is prohibited because of a concept in Jewish Law that 'Civil law is *Halacha*.' He pointed out that this might even be considered a Torah prohibition.

However, he said the definition of 'speeding' depends not on what's written in the traffic codes but on how the law is enforced.

If the authorities are not so strict — for instance, if they won't give you a ticket for going 65 mph —

then it would be allowed under Jewish Law to go 65, although he does not advocate exceeding the posted limit. If, on the other hand, they are generally strict and would likely fine you, then it would be forbidden by the Torah.

He felt that the authorities in the USA are generally not so strict about people going 65 mph in a 55 zone, and therefore it would be permitted. However, this does not mean that if you get a ticket for going 65 you don't have to pay it!

## LOVE of the LAND

*Selections from classical Torah sources which  
express the special relationship between  
the People of Israel and the Land of Israel*

### *Gagot Tzerifin and Ayin Sukar*

*Two Places, Two*

*Grains, Two Holidays*

**O**n the second day of Passover the yearly *Omer* offering was brought upon the altar of the Holy Temple, an *omer* being a measure of barley flour. On Shavuot, seven weeks later, the 'Two Loaves' were offered, two special bread offerings, made from wheat flour.

The *Mishna* tells us that although the grain used in both of these offerings should come from as close to Jerusalem as possible, it could come from more distant places in the Land of Israel if it must. This actually happened during the Hasmonean

civil war, when Aristobolus was entrenched within the walls of Jerusalem, while his brother Hyrkonus laid siege without. The latter's forces had destroyed all the produce in the vicinity of Jerusalem, so a call was issued to see who knew where barley for the *Omer* offering could be procured. A mute Jew came, indicating with one hand on a roof and another on a shack. Mordechai, of Purim fame, asked the people if there was a place called Gagot (Roofs), Tzerifin (Shacks) or Tzerifin Gagot. A search was made, a place named Gagot Tzerifin was found, and barley was secured for the *Omer*.

When the time came to find wheat for the Two Loaves on Shavuot, the same scenario ensued. This time the mute placed one hand on his eye and the other in the hole in the door post into which the bolt is placed. Mordechai asked if there was a place

called Ayin (Eye), Sukar (Hole) or Sukar Ayin. Ayin Sukar was located, and wheat was brought for the 'Two Loaves.'

There is no other historical record of these two remote spots that had their moment of glory in Jewish history. But the contrast between the grains used for the *Omer* and the Two Loaves mentioned in this story communicates an important message. Barley is traditionally regarded in the Talmud as animal food, while wheat is the staple of humans. The *Omer* brought on the Festival of Freedom, Passover, comes from barley because we achieved only physical freedom with our Exodus from Egypt, and that is only animal-like liberation. Only on Shavuot when we received the Torah did we achieve the Divine guidance that endowed us with true human intelligence and responsibility — the tools of human freedom. We therefore bring our 'Two Loaves' on Shavuot from the grain that is the food of humans — wheat.