



Yisro - Forever New

Never Gets Old

The Posuk says: "on the third month of B'nai Yisroel leaving Egypt on **this** day they came to the Sinai desert" Rashi explains: "it should have said on **that** day they arrived at the desert of Sinai, why does it say on **this day**? That the words of Torah should be "new" to you as if they were given today!". This posuk is talking about their arrival to the Sinai desert, not the Torah! The Torah was given nearly a week later! Why is the idea of Torah being "like new" alluded to at the arrival to the Sinai desert? What is the meaning of this idea? Is the Torah commanding us to deceive ourselves and pretend that we are receiving the Torah for the first time today?!? This is all derived from the fact that says on "**this day**" as opposed to on "**that day**" meaning to say: **keep it in the present, as opposed to the Past**. What is the message here?

The Newness of Torah

Koheles says: "there is nothing new under the Sun" Chazal explain that "Under the Sun there is nothing 'new' but over the Sun there is 'new' and what is that? that is Torah!". What does it mean that the Torah is 'new'? It was given already, and Hashem 'wrote it' even prior to creation 'black fire on White fire'. What do we mean by 'new'?

What do we mean by 'New'?

"New" does not have to mean that something was just created. "New" means that the experience is fresh, and 'never gets old'. Hashem 'wrote' the whole Torah even before creation, but the Torah is something that never gets old because it is the will and the wisdom of an infinite power. Just like Hashem never gets old so also his Torah never gets old. There's always something 'new' for the finite mind to learn from an infinite Torah.

Matan Torah never stopped

In the 'Birchos HaTorah' we sign off "blessed are you Hashem The **Giver** (present tense) of the Torah". The Maharal explains that the Torah never stopped being given! 'Matan Torah' is perpetual! Since the Torah is Heavenly and infinite it doesn't really belong in this finite world. It tends to 'recoil' back to its natural place in the highest heavens above where the angels are. Hashem is constantly forcing it to be in this finite earthly plane. This explains why without constant review a person forgets his Torah learning. Torah is Heavenly and it is a miracle a mere mortal to have a grasp on it. The miracle of retention of the spiritual Torah in the physical mind is in the Merit of constantly reviewing. That is for the individual. For the Jewish people as a collective Hashem is still forcing Torah to stay on earth.

Infinity

Another angle on this idea is that the Torah is infinite it cannot be 'given' within finite time. Ever since the time of 'Matan Torah' Hashem is constantly in processs of revealing the infinite Torah to the world. That's why every generation can see something 'new' in the Torah that wasn't seen by earlier generations [with the single exception of Moshe himself]. This is **not** because it's a different Torah! It is the same Torah as given at Mt. Sinai, but Torah is so big and hence constantly in process of 'being given' so it looks 'new'. Every new day is a new vantage point to be added to what was seen yesterday.

Today

This idea of "every day it should be new to you as if today Torah was given" is not self-deception! It is actually to be in touch with the reality of Torah! 'Matan Torah' initiated a process that is still happening and will never end. Every new day is to

be a new experience of Torah! That's what it means that "every day is as If **today** Torah was given". We are supposed to seek the aspect of Torah that you could see **today**, that you could not have seen yesterday, **because it is being given today!**

Today is to yesterday like experience is to memories

Why does the Torah look the same today as it did yesterday? **The problem is that we are looking at today's Torah with yesterday's eyes!** The difference between '**today**' and '**yesterday**' is not time, **it is the difference between experiencing and remembering.** Are we currently mid- experience or are we recalling a experience? Once the experience is over, it's just a memory. What is a memory? A finalized defined record of the experience. The memories won't 'grow' or 'change'. They are static and finalized. However, while you are still in the midsts of experiencing that is called '**Today**' i.e. in the present. **The experience does not get defined until after it's over when you make it a memory.** But until that point you are still formulating your impressions of the experience, because you are still living it. **That's what's being alluded to by "on this day" as opposed to "on that day". Are you experiencing Torah or are you remembering Torah?**

Sights and sounds vs meaning

The 'black on white' of the pages is the same 'black on white' as yesterday, and the 'sound bytes' of explanation may sound the same today as they did yesterday. The 'newness' is in the ever unfolding infinite meaning that it takes forever and ever to 'give over', not in the external sights and sounds! Sadly, upon seeing the familiar 'black on white' and hearing the familiar 'sound bytes' we are prompted to recall how we previously understood those sights and sounds. We need to see beyond the familiar 'black and white' and hear beyond the familiar 'sound bytes' to have a **current experience of Torah** and thus experience "newnes" as opposed to recollections of our previous understandings. **How do we do that?**

The Desert factor

The Torah gives us advice as to how to do this. "...on this day they came to the Sinai **desert**", Chazal tell us the Torah is only acquired by someone who makes himself **like a desert!** **What does this mean?**

A desert is a wide-open place anyone could walk through. Being desolate means it has no shape, form, character or boundaries. In the quest for Torah, one has to be careful not to give himself a concrete definition. One must not view himself as a finished product. A finished product doesn't change, it is stuck in its definition. Do not view your understanding as final definitions. Concrete definitions are not prone to change. "Make yourself like a desert" means that nothing concrete has happened and nothing concrete has been defined. **Everything remains 'wide open' – the experience is never finalized, but perpetually happening.**

Live in the present in the Desert

We could now understand why the allusion to 'Torah being always new' is by coming to the Sinai desert. If a person wants to **'live in the present'**, perpetually experiencing a never ending experience, he has to view himself as desolate! He must never view himself as having completed the experience. The experience is still wide open and still happening. This lesson that had to be taught prior to the giving of the Torah. Hashem was telling us: "I'm going to give you an infinite Torah and I want you to be prepared to appreciate it for what it truly is". You are never done experiencing the Torah, so it 'never gets old'. The experience is perpetually happening. Torah is constantly **'on this day'**, it's in the present and never stops happening. In order for you be 'open' and to overcome your preconceived notions you must 'make yourself like a desert'. Learn humility! Realize that you're not a finished product, and you're not ever done understanding. **The humble man will always live with the Torah in the present, and the experience will be perpetually fresh**

Good Shabbos.

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