

(B/N)

Sivan 29, 5704
June 20, 1944

Pvt. Frank J. Offenbacher
Hq. Co.
141st Engr. (C) Gp.
Camp McCoy, Wisconsin

Dear Pvt. Offenbacher:

I am in receipt of your letter of the 13th of Sivan and wish to answer the inquiry therein.

Your question was as follows: The 10th day of Nissan in the year of the Exodus (year 2448 after creation) occurred on Shabbos (as therefore we call that Shabbos, Shabbos Hagadol). Therefore, if the tenth of the month was Saturday, then the Jews went out of Egypt on a Thursday. According to this reckoning it is impossible that the giving of the Torah was on Shabbos since the 50th day after Thursday - of the Exodus - should be a Friday. How is it that we write in our pamphlet that the giving of the Torah was on Shabbos?

Answer: The tenth of Nissan, 2448 was on Shabbos (See: Shabbos 87:2, also Tur and Schulchan Arush Orach Chaim # 430). Nevertheless the giving of the Torah was on Shabbos as our sages said (Tractate Shabbos 86,2) Matan Torah was fifty-one and not fifty days after the Exodus. (See Maharsho on Tract. Avoda Zera 3,1 and Mogen Abraham on Orach Chaim 5494). Between the 15th of Nissan and the sixth of Sivan there are only fifty days but it is only according to our reckoning of the calendar, where the month of Iyar is always 29 days. However, at that time, the number of days in each month was determined separately and Iyar was not fixed at 29 days. In fact the month of Iyar, year 2446, was 30 days as we find in Shabbos 87, 2. Therefore, there were 51 days between the Exodus and Matan Torah and Matan Torah was on a Saturday instead of a Friday.

May we take this opportunity to congratulate you on the fact that you interest yourself in such questions. Surely you will try to influence your comrades-in-arms, to bring them closer to Torah and Judaism and to interest them in the traditional heritage of their people. At all times Machne Israel stands ready to aid you to the best of its ability. Please do not hesitate to call on us in any problem which may arise.

Yours with Torah greetings,

Rabbi M. Schneerson
Chairman, Executive Committee