

**Temple Aliyah**  
**Shavuot 2016 Sermon Slam**  
**Rabbi William Kaufman**  
**“The Claim”**

The Hebrew Bible confronts us with a claim- with Prophets , beginning with Moses, who claimed to convey the word of God.

The notion that God's will is communicated to the Jewish people ,through its prophets, is known as revelation. Shavuot , the holiday we commemorate, is the time of the giving of the Torah- of revelation.

The Hebrews' response to revelation is expressed in the phrase- We will do it and we will understand it, which may refer to the Ten Commandments or to the entire Torah.

Judaism stresses understanding . It is the first thing we ask for in the daily silent devotion. But how can we understand Divine revelation?

The Jewish theologian Abraham J. Heschel expresses it thus: " Revelation is an act of God in search of humans. This is the core of all Biblical thoughts: God is not a being detached from us but a power that seeks , pursues, and calls upon us. Israel's religion originates in the initiative of God rather than the efforts of humans."

Who took the first step? Humans or God? The humanist will say - Humans. Those who agree with Heschel and the traditionalists will say- God.

The greatest idea of Judaism is the partnership of God and the Jewish people.

The spirit of Shavuot is that God gave the Torah to us. We feel that we have received the gift of Torah from a Higher power. That feeling is the gateway to revelation- the Bible's claim on us.