

Please Note, this newsletter has holy writings and should be disposed of in Geniza only.

Shavuot Newsletter 5784

Shavuot commemorates the receiving of the Torah on Mount Sinai. But this festival has in fact four names:

1. **Hashavuot.** The Festival of Weeks for the seven weeks we count from the beginning of the Omer until the receiving of the Torah on the 6th of Sivan.
2. **Hag Hakatsir.** The Festival of the Wheat Harvest which took place at about this time from which the **Shte-Ha-Lechem** (Two Loaves) were offered.
3. **Hag Habikurim.** The Festival of the First Fruit which were selected and marked while on the trees. When fully grown, they were brought to the Temple with great pageantry.
4. **Atseret.** Meaning to bind. This festival is bound and connected with the Passover, a continuation of **Hag Hapesach.** According to the Zohar, the redemption from Egypt was completed at **Kabbalat Hatorath** on Sinai.

When the children of Israel left Egypt, they were a multitude of slaves; abused and influenced by the idolatry and moral decadence of their Egyptian masters. But in the short space of 49 days, they awakened the dormant spiritual powers within themselves and reached up from the depths of **Tumah** to the 49th height of purity and holiness. They accepted the Torah and submitted themselves completely to the will of G-d without any reservation with the words **Na-ase Ve Nishma**, We shall Fulfil and Hear (i.e. acceptance before understanding).

They raised themselves above their physical instincts and inclinations to soar to the heights of spiritual purity. On the 2nd day of Pesach the Omer was offered - a meal offering of barley which is animal food. Seven weeks later on Shavuot, the **Shte-Ha-Lechem**, 2 loaves of wheat bread was offered - a human food signifying the transition from animal to human.

The pure **Neshama** G-d has put into us has the power to influence us above our animal and basic instincts and desires. Man alone has choice and the ability to draw himself near to G-d in holiness.

Alas today the world strives only for the physical and material fulfilment. Permissiveness has substituted morality and greed and indulgence have become a way of life. The Torah with its eternal message of Truth is our only hope: the Life-bouy which can save us from this sea of decadence. The Torah does not change its message, it is eternal, its goalposts do not move for the sake of convenience or for popular breaches of morality.

Our people, through the Torah, can bring light and knowledge to all the nations as we have done in the past. As it says You should be a kingdom of priests and a holy nation to the people of the world. We do not need to compete with the world in sport or entertainment. We have a greater role to play in the world; living our lives according to the Torah and bringing G-d's light to this darkening world.

CHAG SAMEACH

DAYAN ABRAHAM DAVID

HALACHOT & MINHAGIM CONCERNING SHAVUOT

- a) For the 1st day of Yom Tov, the lights should be kindled before sunset. If the kindling is done after sunset then kindling must be done from an existing flame and not by striking a match. The kindling for the 2nd day must be done only from an existing flame. The beracha *leHadleek ner shel Yom Tov* and *Shehechyanu* should be made **before** the lighting even by a woman, not as on Shabbat when the beracha is made after lighting.
- b) On Yom Tov, you may not melt a candle to stick into the holder for lighting it must be done before Yom Tov. On Yom Tov, just jam it into the holder with a stick or a piece of silver foil.
- c) We stay up all night reading TIKUN which is a sample of the Torah - Neybeim, Ketubim, the 613 mitzvot, Midrash and the Eidrah Rabah (part of the Zohar). We call this Hatima and people commemorate their departed relatives' souls by bringing food, fruits and refreshments in their memory. We pray shacharit at **3:45am** (Netz **4:44am**)
- d) We kindle lights in memory of the departed relatives – Leiluy Nishmatam
- e) We read Megilath Ruth and the Azharoth.
- f) Akdamoth: Read by our Ashkenazi brethren, a poem in praise of G-d which is written in Aramaic and read in Synagogue on Shavuot.
- g) Synagogues are decorated with flowers and greens to remind us of Mount Sinai which was surrounded with flowers and greenery. We say all of Tehilim on Shavuot in commemoration of David Hamelech who passed away on this day.
- h) Shavuot is also known as Hag Habikurim. The first fruit of the season was brought up to the Temple as an offering. This was done with great pomp and pageantry - people gathered together in large groups and carried up to Jerusalem the fruit beautifully decorated and accompanied by music. They were welcomed by all the notables of Jerusalem as they came to thank G-d for the Blessings of the Land He had given to them.
- i) We eat kahie with halek (date juice). Kahie is flour dough prepared with butter. Milk and honey, to fulfil the pasuk referring to the Torah 'Chalav vu'davash tachat Leshonech' which gives sustenance and sweetness to our lives as does 'milk and honey'
- j) We eat milky food on Shavuot morning after Shaharith. (We have to make Kiddush before we eat.) For when the Israelites received the Torah, they did not have enough time to slaughter animals and kosher their utensils etc., so they ate milky dishes which were easier to prepare. There are many other reasons given for this Minhag.

Shavuot is a Yom Tov, it is therefore forbidden to do any work as on Shabbat, the only difference being that we are allowed to prepare food that we need for the same day. Even though the Torah allows all work which has to do with our food, our Chachamim have placed some restrictions on certain preparations of food:

- a) They forbid the harvesting of crops and plucking of fruit, threshing, grinding, sieving, squeezing for the purpose of extracting juices; one may not make cheese on Yom Tov. One may light a fire for whatever purpose, but this must be done from an existing flame. Therefore, one may not strike a match or switch on a light or any electrical appliances for the purpose of cooking etc.
- b) One should not mash or grind food with a hand grinder, use a fork which is a *shenui* (change). One should not cut onions etc. too fine on Yom Tov. One may use a hand grater to grate vegetables since we do not do large quantities on them, and grating before Yom Tov would degrade the taste.
- c) One may sew Hashva on Yom Tov with a thread and needle but the needle should be threaded before Yom Tov with a suitable length of thread.
- d) You may not turn off a gas or electric cooker or oven after having finished cooking but you are allowed to use a time-switch to turn on or off the oven if it is set before Yom Tov.
- e) You are allowed to increase the flame of a gas stove or oven but not an electric one.

- f) You may lower the flame of a gas stove or oven to prevent the food from burning, if you need a steady low flame for cooking whilst the food is on the fire. If one needs to boil water on a gas stove, he may allow the water to boil over and extinguish the flame. He can then turn off the gas control so the gas will not escape.
- g) Weighing or measuring is not permitted even if it is for preparation of food; it has to be done by approximation.
- h) Even though one should not smoke at any time to fulfil the mitzvah '*Vushmartem et Nafshotechem*', smoking is permitted provided the cigarette/cigar is lit from an existing flame and is not stubbed out. It should be allowed to extinguish by itself. Rolling of cigarettes is not permitted.
- i) One must not cook food or drinks for a Goy (non-Jew) on Yom Tov but one may give him/her from the dish that has been prepared for a Jew.
- j) One may light a *Ner Neshama* from a existing flame even though there is no physical benefit.
- k) One must not cook or prepare on the 1st day of the Yom Tov for the 2nd day or for any other day. Anyhow one may cook extra for the first day in the same pot even intentionally and use what is left for the 2nd day without explicitly saying so.
- l) One must not cook or prepare on the 1st day of the Yom Tov for the 2nd day or for any other day except if the 2nd day falls on Shabbat or Shabbat follows Yom Tov when it is permitted with an **Eruv Tavshillin**. Anyhow one may cook extra for the first day in the same pot even intentionally and use what is left for the 2nd day without explicitly saying so.

TIMINGS FOR SHAVUOT 2024/5784

Tuesday 11th June 2024

Erev Shavuot

Mincha followed by a Devar Torah and Arvit of Yom Tov

9:00 pm

Candle lighting

9:02 pm

Kiddush not before

10:20pm

Tikkun for the night of Shavuot – all night learning 12:00am

Youth Programme

12:15am

Wednesday 12th June 2024

1st day Yom Tov

Shacharit and Musaf

3:45am

Sunrise

4:44am

Followed by Kiddush

Mincha and Azharot

followed by a Devar Torah

7pm

Early Candle Lighting

7:35 pm

Arbit

7:45pm

Sunset

9:18pm (meal to be underway by this time if eating early)

Nightfall

10:27pm

Thursday 13th June 2024

2nd day Yom Tov

Shacharit, Musaf and Azharot

8:30 am

Avot Ubanim

5pm

Shiur by Dayan David

8:05 pm

Mincha Yom Tov

9:05 pm

Followed by shiurim

Arbit / Yom Tov terminates

10:34 pm