

# Celebration!

## Shavuos Guide

6-7 SIVAN, 5773/MAY 14-16, 2013



# 613



## United as One

**The Practical & Soulful  
Meaning of the Holiday:**  
The Torah, The Mitzvos and  
their purposes.





# Some Shavuos Thoughts

## Jewish Unity!

A beautiful phrase, a wonderful goal, but how important a role does it really play within us as a people, and as individuals.

Why does Judaism place such essential importance on the issue of Jewish unity, and how can each of us make it happen?

To address this, another question is in order.

The first statement of the first commandment – the very first words we heard from G-d at Mount Sinai – were “I am the L-rd, your G-d who has taken you out of Mitzrayim (Egypt)”. The question begs itself, wouldn’t it be more fitting for G-d to introduce himself as the master of the universe – “creator of heaven and earth”?

Also, the exodus from Egypt seems to take center stage in Jewish life. Every holiday – including Shavuos – and a multitude of Mitzvos (example: Shabbat, Tefilin) are observed “in remembrance of the Exodus from Egypt”. What’s the connection?

To understand this, we must revisit the question: what’s the whole point of Judaism, Torah and Mitzvot?

The key to all the above is “Unity!”.

G-d created a seemingly disparate world, made of a multitude of parts, so that we discern its common denominator, its essence which unites them all; namely, the G-dly power that infuses it all with life.

Being able to reach in, to discover the essence within the multitude of the quantitatively and qualitatively different and even opposite parts – is “Exodus”.

Exodus from seeing the limitations of each of the parts and the disparity of the opposites and realizing that they actually complement each other to form one beautiful united tapestry.

And this is what Judaism, Torah, and Mitzvot are all about. It was given to us to unite with their

Commander and rise above our personal limitations. Rather than being boxed-in, limited to our own experience, to realize that there is a higher cause beyond our limitations, and live life as directed by the Creator of it all, who is helping us to break out of limitations and straits – Mitzrayim (Egypt) in the Hebrew language.

What are the particular tools to break out? Matzah.

We celebrate Passover, the holiday of freedom, breaking out of our limitations by eating Matzah.

Matzah represents humility and submission to a higher order. Being “full of oneself”, being “smart”, tending only to “my own needs” creates a box around that person; he does not see a need to share, to unite with others, certainly not those who are intellectually, socially and economically different.

Realizing that there is a higher cause, a higher order helps one let go of his limitation and join in the “mindset” and plan of the Creator of all – in whose eyes every part is important and fitting.

Then and only then, can there be true unity.

And that’s essential to our Jewishness, and to the giving and receiving of the Torah. As our sages state, “That if there would have been even one person missing there, the Torah would not have been given”.

And this is the meaning of the famous statement by the sage Hillel “This [love to one’s fellow] is the entire Torah, the rest is commentary”, being the details of the fulfillment of the goal of the giving of the Torah.

And in this spirit you may just want to invite another Jew and help them to enrich their Jewish lives with the knowledge of Torah and observance of a Mitzvah.

**Best wishes for a united and joyous Shavuos; happy receiving of the Torah!**

**Rabbi Yisroel Shmotkin**

# Celebration!

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*Dedicated to the Rebbe,  
Rabbi Menachem M.  
Schneerson, OBM,  
whose boundless love and  
teachings are an  
endless source of inspiration  
and guidance.*

**For holiday schedule, candle lighting times & blessings see page 34.**

## THE REBBE'S MESSAGE

# Sleeping Late

“Why was there no man when I came? When I called, why was there none to answer?”

**T**here is an age old custom to stay up all night on the night of Shavuot, the festival that commemorates receiving the Torah at Sinai. The basis for this practice is to rectify the fact that on the morning that G-d gave the Torah, the entire Jewish nation overslept. This is alluded to by a verse in Isaiah (50:2): “Why was there no man when I came? When I called, why was there none to answer?”

**It begs the question**, how could such a debacle have occurred. The idea that an entire nation could sleep late on the same morning seems strange enough, but that such a thing could happen on the morning that the Jews were to witness the very revelation of G-d. It's not as if they didn't know what was supposed to happen that morning. Indeed, ever since leaving Egypt forty-nine days prior, the Jews had literally been counting the days until their anticipated meeting with G-d at Sinai. So, how could such a scenario have happened?

**The answer is** that the Jews slept on purpose. They understood the magnitude of such an unprecedented event; and, as such, they deliberately planned a mass “sleep-in” as the ultimate, culminating phase in their preparation for this most momentous occasion.

**They knew that after forty-nine days** of intense self-refinement, there was no more they could do to make themselves ready. A mortal being is only capable of refining himself so much. A human being can only reach so high. Unless, of course, one could divest oneself of the trappings of the body and continue striving in a purely spiritual state. The Jews slept to achieve disembodiment.

**When a person sleeps**, although the intellectual faculties are not in full force and control of the body, the soul, nevertheless, is freer and is able to experience that which it cannot while the soul is limited by the body's confinements. They slept so that their souls could leave behind the consciousness of physical existence and climb to the heights of heaven. This, they decided, was the final frontier in their

preparation for communion with the Divine.

**However, they fundamentally misunderstood** that the very purpose of G-d's giving the Torah was to give us a means for sanctifying the physical and the mundane. G-d gave us mitzvos so we could make the world holy. Accordingly, the preparation for receiving the Torah should have also been connected with an attempt to imbue spirituality into the material world and not, as they assumed, to escape into a realm of the spirit.

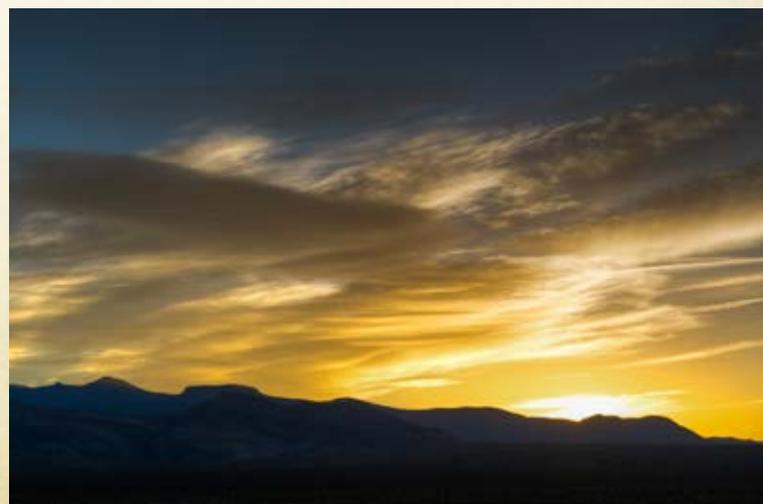
**In hindsight**, it's easy to see that their plan was flawed. But how many of us often fall prey to this very same line of thinking in our own search for G-d? We spurn the world of the day-to-day in quest for what we deem to be more “lofty” concerns. Rather than trying to deal with regular life in a more G-dly manner, we run away from our real responsibilities and sanctimoniously indulge in a most insidious form of self-righteous, self-important escapism. We run off after a “higher calling” only to find ourselves disconnected from the very situations and people most in need our help.

**Whether or not** one manages to observe the custom of staying up all night - you may at least recall history and take to heart this one lesson. Be conscious; be present; look for your calling in the now and in the moment. G-d wants you down here on earth to bring G-dliness into the world by being engaged in day to day affairs, yet elevating them by living a life in accordance with G-d's will and observing His mitzvos.

*Adapted from the teachings of the Rebbe, Rabbi Menachem M. Schneerson, OBM.*



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their souls could leave  
behind the consciousness  
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heights of heaven.*



# A Brief History of the Giving of the Torah

**S**havuot is a continuation and culmination of the redemption from Egyptian slavery. (For a brief history of the origin of the Jewish people, their enslavement and miraculous redemption, see *Passover Celebration Brochure 2013*, page 4.).

When Moses announced to the Jewish people the forthcoming redemption, he simultaneously informed them that G-d was going to give them His Torah. The Jewish people were eagerly looking forward to this event.

On the first of Sivan, the third month after the exodus from Egypt, in the year 2448 on the Jewish calendar (1313 BCE), the children of Israel reached the Sinai desert and camped near the mountain.

During the preceding weeks of traveling in the desert, experiencing daily miracles, such as the crossing of the Red Sea, the manna and the quail and the miraculous sweetening of the water, and more, the Jewish people had become more conscious of G-d's Divine protection every day that passed.

Moses ascended Mount Sinai, and G-d spoke to him the following words: "You have seen what I did to Mizrayim

(Egypt), and how I bore you on eagles' wings, and brought you to myself. Now, therefore, if you will obey my voice, and keep my covenant, then you shall be my own treasure from among all peoples: for all the earth is mine, and you shall be a kingdom of priests, and a holy nation."

Moses returned from Mount Sinai and presented these words before the Jewish people. Unanimously, with one voice and one heart, they responded: *Naaseh Venishma*, "Everything G-d has said, we shall do and we shall listen."

Thus, they accepted the Torah outright, with all its precepts. When Israel had voiced its eagerness to receive the Torah, G-d told Moses again: "Go to the people, and sanctify them today and tomorrow, and let them wash their clothes, and be ready by the third day: for on the third day the Lord will come down in the sight of all the people upon Mount Sinai."

On the sixth day of Sivan, G-d pronounced the Ten Commandments before the entire Jewish people.

Following the receiving of the Ten Commandments, Moses ascended Mount Sinai and was there for forty days and nights. He learned every aspect of Torah with all its levels of application. This included all the details of the 613 Mitzvot, and how they would be applied in Torah guidance throughout the ages.

Finally, G-d gave Moses the two stone "Tablets of Testimony", containing the Ten Commandments, written by G-d Himself.



## Holiday of Shavuot in a Nut Shell

### What, Where, and When

The holiday of Shavuot celebrates the Jewish people's receiving of the Torah. It was G-d's rendezvous with the Jewish People 3,325 years ago at a humble mountain called Sinai. It was the first and only time the Creator communicated with an **entire nation**.

Shavuot marks the culmination of the "birth" of the Jewish people as a nation that began at the exodus on Passover. It took place fifty days after leaving Egypt. With giving them the Torah, G-d entrusted the Jewish people with the cosmic mission of bringing Divine light to the universe.

This moment and mission are celebrated on Shavuot, as we rededicate ourselves to our spiritual task.

### The Name

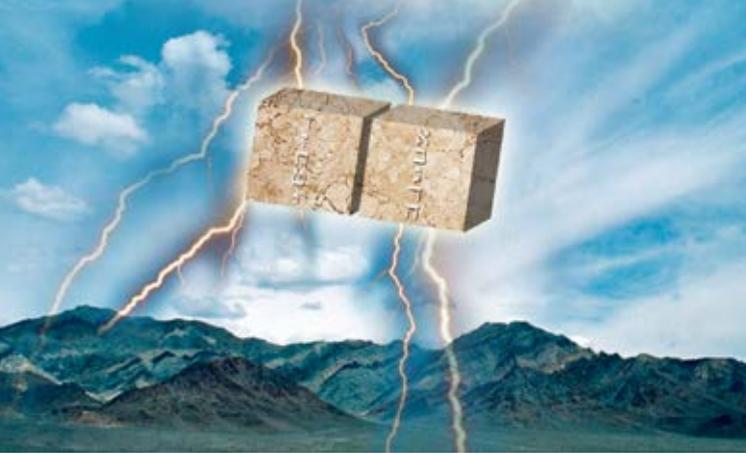
*Shavuot* means "weeks," referring to the seven weeks our ancestors counted after the Exodus from Egypt, anxiously awaiting the giving of the Torah.

Shavuot also means "oaths." The name indicates the oaths which G-d and Israel exchanged on the day of the giving of the Torah, to remain faithful to each other forever.

**What happened at this great encounter? What does it mean to us today? And how do we celebrate it? All this and more you will find in this guide.**

**Enjoy!**





The Ten Commandments function as a summary of the entire Torah. The Sages point out that the text of the Commandments contains 620 letters, corresponding to each of the 613 Biblical Mitzvot and the Seven Rabbinical Laws.

### What is the Torah?

The word "Torah" is popularly referred to as the 5 books written by a scribe on a parchment scroll. Originally transcribed by Moses as he heard it from G-d, it has been copied thousands of times in every generation in the exact same words and script. It is this Torah scroll that we read in the synagogue.



In addition to the Five Books of Moses, the Torah includes as well the *Nevi'im* (The Prophets) and *Kesuvim* (The Holy Writings), all of which form the "Written Torah." The Torah includes as well the **Oral Law**.

While the written law forms the "constitution" of the Torah, its interpretation, the oral law, was also given to Moses at Sinai. Both were simultaneously transmitted from generation to generation.

The word "Torah" means instruction or guide. It contains 613 commandments, of which 248 are positive (do's) and 365 are negative (don't's).

## The Ten Commandments, the Torah, & the Mitzvos

**IT WAS THE MOST AWESOME MOMENT** in the history of the world and mankind. On the sixth of Sivan, on the Hebrew calendar (1316 BC), G-d revealed himself to the Jewish people, millions of them - men, women and children - standing at the foot of Mount Sinai, as He spoke the Ten Commandments.

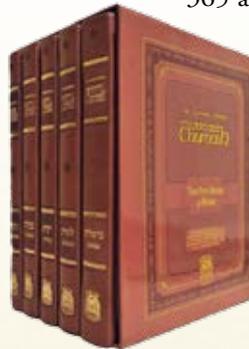
*It is this event, the revelation of G-d Himself, without a mediator that established for all of the people, the truth and eternity of the Torah.*

*After the giving of the Ten Commandments, Moses ascended to the peak of Mount Sinai, and stayed there for forty days and nights. During this time, G-d taught him the entire Torah, as well as the principles of its interpretation for all time. He also gave him the two precious stone tablets, in which He engraved the Ten Commandments.*

*Upon his descent, Moses taught the Torah to the Jewish people. The Torah was then taught and transmitted from generation to generation, until this very day.*

### About The Ten Commandments

The Ten Commandments (as listed on page 9) concern both, laws between man and G-d (such as the Shabbat), and laws between man and man (such as honoring one's parents); laws concerning action and speech (do not utter My Name in vain), and laws concerning thoughts and feelings (do not covet that which belongs to another).



### The Five Books of Moses

In *Genesis*, the first book, we learn of G-d's creation of the world and humanity; the life story of the founding fathers and mothers of the Jewish people – Abraham and Sarah, Isaac and Rebecca, Jacob and Leah and Rachel, and their families.

In the following book of *Exodus* we learn of the enslavement of their descendants in Egypt; their miraculous deliverance and exodus; G-d's revelation at Mount Sinai, the giving of the Ten Commandments, followed by particular instructions, laws and the building of the sanctuary.

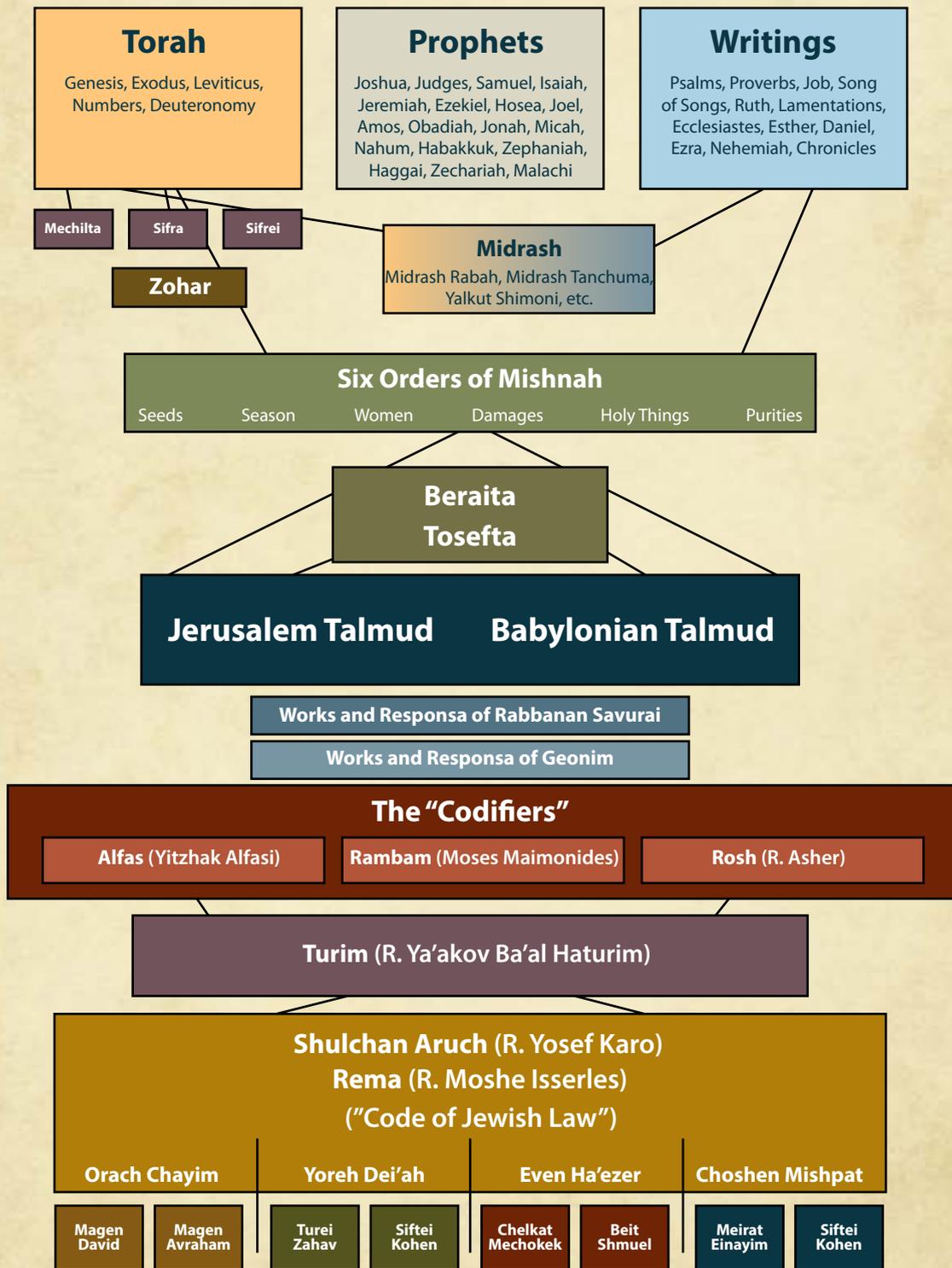
In the third book, *Leviticus*, G-d instructs us concerning the services at the Temple (first during the forty years in the desert and later on in Jerusalem); laws concerning proper conduct between man and his fellow and between man and G-d.

In *Numbers* we learn of the census of the Jewish people; their trials and tribulations during their forty-year travels in the desert.

In the last book, *Deuteronomy*, Moses offers the Jewish people inspiration for years to come, including the promise that regardless of their condition,

*Continued on page 7*

# THE TORAH FROM SINAI



"Scripture, Mishnah, Talmud, Aggadah, even what young students will innovate in the future before their teacher, were all already said to Moses on Sinai." (Jerusalem Talmud, Peah 2:4)

challenges, trials and tribulations, G-d will never forsake them, and will continue to relate to the Jewish people through His prophets; the book includes the setting of the Torah judicial system and Moses' foreseeing of the future.

### The Prophets

Following the passing of Moses, as promised, G-d revealed himself to individuals of great piety and spirituality. These are the prophets who related and recorded G-d's instructions and messages. There are 19 books of the prophets. In all, we had 48 prophets and 7 prophetesses whose prophecies were recorded for their everlasting importance.

### The Holy Writings

These include the books like Psalms, Song of Songs, Ruth, and Esther, 11 in all, all of which were written for posterity by one of our people of great piety by ruach hakodesh (divine inspiration).

### The Oral Law

The written Torah, its narratives and laws are conveyed in an extremely concise fashion demanding elucidation by way of the Oral Law which contains the details of the Commandments, their meanings, and general principles for the interpretation of the written law.

### The Mishnah

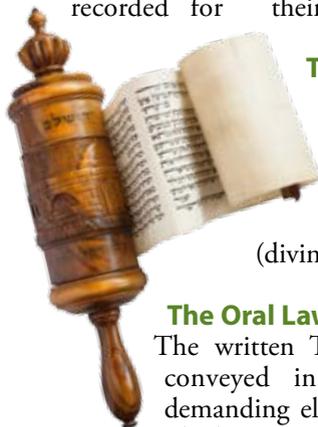
The study of these principals and the interpretations derived that has been the occupation of the Jewish people throughout the ages. These teachings have been the common study of all of the Jewish people; they have been transmitted orally from generation to generation.

After the destruction of the second temple (in the year 70 BCE) and the Jewish people exiled from Israel, their homeland, having being dispersed all over, the essentials of the oral law were recorded (200 CE) in the form of the Mishnah, as well as other compilations.

These recordings and the Mishnah in particular, excerpted by and agreed upon by the scholars of the time, have then become the basis for all studies of future generations.

### The Talmud

As time went on, it became necessary to record not only the essential principles and laws, but also the critical elaborations upon these principles. Three hundred years after the writing of the Mishnah (500 CE), the great Torah scholars of that generation compiled and



recorded the Talmud. It was accepted by all the scholars of that and future generations as the ultimate authorized book on Jewish law.

### Shulchan Aruch – Code of Jewish Law

Ever since, the Jewish people have studied the Talmud and applied its wisdom and principles to matters as they arose, eventually leading to the formation of the code of Jewish law.

These elaborations, decision-making, rulings and books are all based on the explicit principles spelled out in the written law – the five books of Moses. It, therefore, carries the weight of Torah itself.

(See diagram on page 6 for a brief overview of the transition of the Torah)

### The Kabbalah - Hidden Part of the Torah

The Torah in its origin and essence is G-d's infinite wisdom and will. It is this infinite G-dly wisdom that is concentrated in the practical laws of the Torah addressing mundane worldly matters that may be comprehended by human logic.

The Torah, as it deals with practical laws, is the revealed part of the Torah. The esoteric and mystical element of the Torah focuses on the G-dly dimension and metaphysical significance of the Torah and Mitzvos. These are the teachings of Kabbalah and Chassidus. They are, as referred to in Jewish tradition, the Neshoma (soul) and essence of the Torah.

Both the hidden and revealed are inseparable parts of the Torah, received from Sinai and transmitted from generation to generation throughout history. (See page 10 for more on the Kabbalah.)



### SIGNIFICANCE OF THE TORAH

In addition to being a guide for a Jew's life, the inner significance of the Torah is the fact that it is G-d's wisdom. By learning and internalizing the Torah, a person's mind becomes united with G-d's wisdom and through it "embraces" G-d Himself.

Although Torah Law concerns itself greatly with simple, mundane, day to day life matters, nevertheless, therein is vested G-d's infinite wisdom. Analogous to a therapist' simple advice containing the solution to the conflicts for the deepest recesses of the patient's soul: or a parent's simple instruction to a child intended to affect the child's future, etc. etc.



Continued on page 8

## The Mitzvot

There are six hundred thirteen 613 divine commandments embracing every facet of our lives, both the duties to our fellow men and the way to worship G-d. The positive commandments, numbering two hundred forty-eight 248, equal the number of organs in the human body, implying that a person should serve the Creator with every part of his being.

The three hundred sixty-five 365 negative commandments are equivalent to the number of blood vessels in the human body, indicating that when we guard ourselves from transgressing these prohibitions – as we might be tempted to do by desires inherent in the blood – each one of our blood vessels remains “unblemished” and pure.

The number 365, also equals the number of days of the year.

### Seven Rabbinical Mitzvot

In advancing the cause of Torah and furthering a Jew's devotion and thankfulness to G-d, seven Mitzvot were added by Jewish leaders throughout the ages.

Among them: the holiday of Purim, Chanukah, washing of hands before eating bread, Shabbat and holiday candle lighting, and others.

These institutions too are considered Mitzvot as we were instructed in the Torah to obey the rules established by the judges and Torah scholars.

### Seven Noachide Laws

In the Torah there are also instructions for gentiles; generally described as the Seven Noachide Laws, which include universal civil laws as given to Moses at Sinai.



## SIGNIFICANCE OF THE MITZVOS

Like the hidden depths of the wisdom of the Torah laws, the simple acts of Mitzvoths, being commanded by the infinite G-d, contain infinite significance. When we do a Mitzvah, we are “doing the infinite”, the Divine.

As physical beings, we cannot feel the depths of each of our Mitzvah acts – such as Tefilin, Shabbos candle lightings, etc. – nevertheless, they are still acts of infinity. Like the simple act of turning on an electric switch without understanding or realizing the effect it may have on, say, an entire city.

Furthermore, Mitzvah literally means commandment; however, it also means companionship, from the Aramaic “tzavta” (companionship). Upon fulfilling a commandment, one becomes united with G-d, who ordained that precept. For, regardless of the nature of the commandment, the fulfillment of G-d's desire creates a relationship between the creator and the human who executed it. By fulfilling His wish, a person is in “G-d's company.”

Thus, this is the inner interpretation of our Sages' statement (Avos 4:2): “The reward of a mitzvah is a mitzvah,” indicating that the mitzvah itself is the greatest reward, for this sets us in companionship with the eternal and infinite G-d. All other rewards are secondary in comparison to this great merit.

## The Torah Is...

**THE TORAH IS A MANUFACTURER'S MANUAL.** Valuable things come with a book of instructions on how to properly and optimally use them. Lawn mowers, mp3 players, minivans have a guidebook. The same applies to the valuable (and complicated) thing we call life—the Manufacturer accompanied it with an instruction book. (See article “Unplugged”, page 14.)

**THE TORAH IS A CONTRACT.** When two parties enter into a partnership, binding their financial futures to a joint destiny, they draw up a contract that spells out their respective duties and commitments. When



two people marry, a marriage contract, called a ketubah, is drawn up that does the same. The Torah is our marriage contract with G-d, the document that details the commitments and duties we assumed toward each other when G-d chose us as His people and we chose Him as our G-d at Sinai.

**THE TORAH IS IDENTITY.** What connects the red-bearded chassid in Moscow with the black-skinned Yemenite Jew? What does the West Coast Jewish filmmaker have in common with his peddler grandfather or his olive-growing ancestor? Nothing. They share no common language, facial features or diet. Any two Jews can be as culturally or even genetically diverse as any other two members of the human race. But the Shema recited today in a Canadian synagogue is the same Shema that was proclaimed in Egypt 3,500 years ago; the criteria for the mikveh built at Masada is the same as for the one in Brazil and Milwaukee. Torah bridges continents and de-gaps generations to serve as our single common expression of our Jewishness.



### THE TORAH IS VISION.

Why are we here? Where are we going? “An architect who builds a palace,” cites the Midrash, “has scrolls and notebooks which he consults to know how to place the rooms, where to set the

doors. So it was with G-d: He looked into the Torah and created the world.” Torah is the divine blueprint for creation, the vision that illuminates the foundations of existence, its purpose and its significance. To study and live Torah is to understand and experience the soul of reality.

*From Chabad.org, by Yanki Tauber*

# The Children Are The Guarantors

**B**efore G-d consented to give the Torah to the Jewish people, He requested guarantors, who would guarantee the Torah's continuity in Jewish life.

The Jewish people offered several possible guarantors, from the patriarchs to the prophets, but G-d was not satisfied until the little children were suggested.

Only children can be the guarantors and transmitters of Torah; our commitment to their education is the best assurance of our continued commitment to Torah and mitzvot.



## The CHILDREN

*Who secured the deal  
with G-d at Sinai?  
The kids did.*

**When we read the Ten Commandments in the synagogue on Shavuot, we make every effort that the children – even the smallest kids – should be there, right in the front row.**

Join in the ice cream party immediately following the reading.

*(See page 19 for locations and times.)*

## THE TEN COMMANDMENTS

1. I am G-d your L-rd who took you out of the land of Egypt.
2. You shall have no other gods before me.
3. Do not take the name of G-d your L-rd in vain.
4. Remember the Sabbath to keep it holy.
5. Honor your father and mother.
6. Do not murder.
7. Do not commit adultery.
8. Do not steal.
9. Do not bear false witness.
10. Do not covet.



# THE KABBALAH

**KABBALAH.** The mere mention of the word conjures up images of magical and mysterious otherworldly dimensions, of spiritual secrets that are profoundly miraculous and deeply inspiring. Nowadays it seems everyone—Jew or non-Jew, famous or nameless—is discovering and uncovering the divine truths of Kabbalah. Or are they?

**That question raises three, more pointed ones:** What is the essence of Kabbalah? Will opening the exploration of Kabbalah to the masses demean and distort this extremely difficult and highly spiritual subject, reducing it to the level of pop culture? If Kabbalah is not appropriate for popular study, is it somehow still relevant to our lives?

**Kabbalah literally means “receiving”;** in Israel today, the receipt you get when making a purchase is called a kabbalah. The Bible, or Written Law, is given by G-d and is available to anyone who can read it. The Oral Law—which includes the Kabbalah—is received, passed directly from teacher to pupil.

**Most of Torah** is considered Torah haniglet—revealed Torah, to be studied by all Jews. Kabbalah, however, was designated chochmah nisteret—hidden wisdom. In truth, Kabbalah was never literally hidden, but was not widely, or even publicly, studied.

**The reason for restricting** the study of Kabbalah relates to its subject matter. Kabbalah encompasses two general themes: ma’aseh bereishit—the theory or description of creation—and ma’aseh merkavah—Ezekiel’s description of the Heavenly Chariot, which teaches us about the relationship between humans and the Almighty.

**When I discuss matters** that are tangible and open for all to see and appreciate, things that are already “revealed,” it is simple for others to verify the truth of what I say. But if I am talking about angels, for example, I must be very careful. If I speculate from ignorance, what I say will be nonsense. And it may become dangerous nonsense if I fail to realize the power and meaning of what I am saying and end up defiling the Majesty of G-d.

**Equally as esoteric** as its subject matter is the language of Kabbalah. It is presented as a stream of abstract formulas, conveyed in Kabbalah’s own unique jargon, understood only by a select cadre of scholars trained to decipher it. To avoid misunderstanding, Kabbalah had to be taught one-on-one by a

master teacher singularly attuned to the capabilities and receptivity of each student. One cannot simply open the classic Kabbalistic texts and glean their truths in a vacuum.

**Unfortunately, today Kabbalah** has been commercialized by those who pretend to grasp its innermost secrets. These pretenders purport to teach—and to sell—what they do not understand, to people who are not equipped to receive it. Kabbalah’s mystifying formulas become nothing more than intoxicating mantras to those who mindlessly repeat them. This is like trying to cure an illness by chanting the chemical formula of the remedy.

**This is not to say that Kabbalah** should not be studied and learned. In fact, it is incumbent upon Jewish scholars to understand the whole map of Torah from beginning to end, the Hidden Law no less than the Revealed Law. Throughout history, there have been those who, very quietly, achieved extensive knowledge of the Hidden Law.

**But today, most of us** are simply incapable of comprehending Kabbalah. For us the question is, “Is there some way we, too, can ‘receive’ the remarkable teachings of Kabbalah in a meaningful way, without treading upon its divine essence?”

One answer lies in the Chassidic approach to Kabbalah.

**It is a basic Kabbalistic concept** that the human soul is, in a manner of speaking, a spark of Divine revelation within the world and that each

human being is a microcosm of the entire universe. Chassidism shows how the rarified teachings of Kabbalah, which speak to the macro-universe, can be adapted into a structure with ethical and practical meaning for our individual lives.

**In this way, Chassidism** is a form of applied Kabbalah. Just as the Revealed Law frames the behavior of our bodies, the internalization of Kabbalistic notions of the Hidden Law can attune us to our soul, educating it to connect with the Divine. In this model, the power of Kabbalah is harnessed not to serve our own desires but to align them with the wishes of the Almighty.

**One of the most important** Chassidic books is called Zohar Chai, “the living Zohar.” That is what Chassidism does: It gives the Kabbalah life by translating it into something meaningful in one’s relationships with others and, most important, something that can quell the strife within one’s own soul and calm the struggle of one’s inner being.

*By Rabbi Adin Even-Yisrael Steinsaltz*





(such as Chanukah, Purim, etc.). 620 is the numerical value of the Hebrew word “Kesser”- a crown. Each mitzvah is considered a part of G-d’s crown. When fulfilling a mitzvah a person offers a crown to the Almighty.



### A Triple Torah

Everything connected with the giving of the Torah was of a triple nature: the Torah consists of Chumash (the five books of Moses), Prophets, and the Holy Writing (TeNaCH). It was given to Israel, comprised of Kohanim (priests), Levites and Israelites, through Moses, the third child in the family, after three days of preparation, in the third month (Sivan).

### Three Knots

The Zohar declares “Three are interlocked together: Israel, the Torah, the Holy One, blessed be He.”



### As One Man, with One Heart

Our Sages relate that when the Jews camped before Mount Sinai, they were “as one man, with one heart.” Many of their other journeys were characterized by differences of opinion and even strife. However, when they prepared to receive the Torah, the Jews joined together with a feeling of unity and harmony. This oneness was a necessary prerequisite to the giving of the Torah. (See article “Countdown”, page 11)

### Ladies First

To assure that the Torah would be well received and perpetuated, G-d told Moses to first address the women: “Say to the House of Jacob” (referring to the women) was followed by “Tell the sons of Israel” (Exodus 19:3) (referring to the men).

Women should be knowledgeable in Torah, to learn how to fulfill the Mitzvot in a full Jewish life.

The woman influences and affects her home and environment. It is the mother who primarily instills values in her children, encourages her husband to observe and study Torah, and affects others through her hospitality, warmth and teaching.

### Sight and Sound

The Book of Exodus relates that when G-d gave us the Torah at Mount Sinai, “The people saw the voices.” “They saw what is ordinarily heard,” remark our sages, “and they heard what is ordinarily seen.”

As physical beings, we “see” physical reality. On the other hand, G-dliness and spirituality is only something that is “heard”—it can be discussed, perhaps even understood to some extent, but not experienced first hand.

But at the revelation at Sinai, we “saw what is ordinarily heard” – we experienced the Divine as an immediate,

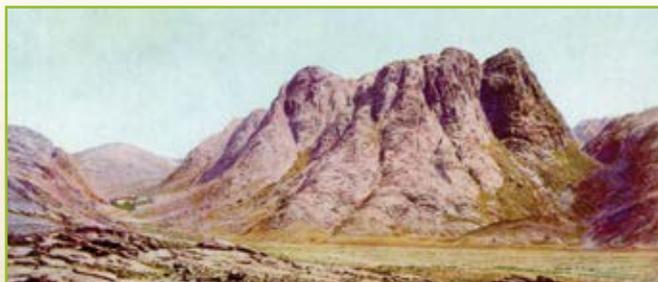
## FROM OUR TRADITION

# About the Torah and the Giving of the Torah

### The Lowest Mountain

We all know that the Ten Commandments were given on Mount Sinai. Why Sinai? Say the Sages: Sinai is the lowest of all mountains, to show that humility is an essential prerequisite to receiving the Torah.

Why then on a mountain? Why not in a plain - or a valley? The Code of Jewish Law states at the very beginning: “Do not be embarrassed by mockery and ridicule.” For to receive the Torah you must be low; but to keep it, sometimes you must be a mountain.



### Purpose of the Torah

The Midrash relates that when G-d was about to give the Torah the heavenly angels argued that He should offer it to them! Upon G-d’s request Moses replied, “Have you been in Egypt? Do you have an evil inclination?”

This implies that the Torah was given in order to elevate humanity as well as the world in general. Precisely for those who have an evil inclination and need to be refined, was the Torah given.

### Kesser - A Crown

The Ten Commandments consist of 620 letters, equaling the number of the 613 Mitzvos and the 7 Rabbinical Mitzvos

*Continued on page 13*

# COUNTDOWN

**THE PREPARATIONS** for any given event give us an idea as to the substance of the anticipated event. The woman in a bridal boutique purchasing a white wedding gown is preparing for her wedding day, and the person in a camping site collecting dry wood and arranging it in a pile is getting ready to make a bonfire. It's a pretty fair assumption that the wedding gown isn't intended for wear at a bonfire, and the wood isn't being stacked in a pyramid in anticipation of a wedding reception. The same applies with preparations for spiritual and religious events. A month of introspection and repentance is certainly the suitable preparation for the High Holidays, when Gd examines our deeds and renders a judgment regarding the new year. And scouring the house in search of chametz is a sure sign that Passover is approaching — a holiday when the possession of all leavened substances are banned for eight days.

**Shavuot is the holiday** that marks the anniversary of the day when Gd gave us the Torah. This monumental day also follows a preparation period—the seven-week Omer counting period. We prepare for Shavuot by counting numbers.

Interestingly, the Torah portion of Bamidbar is always read shortly before Shavuot, usually the Shabbat immediately preceding the holiday. This Torah reading begins the book of Numbers, and the portion is indeed filled with numbers. First a census is taken of the Israelites, and the Torah supplies us with the number of Israelites in each tribe, in each of the four "flags," and then gives the grand totals. The Levites are then counted — twice. The firstborns earn their very own head-count, too.

**Why the countdown to the holiday of Shavuot?** What is the connection between numbers and counting and the special gift our nation received on this holiday?

Counting is an equalizer. Every unit which is counted adds up to one, no more and no less. Let us use the two countings which we have just mentioned — the Omer counting and the censuses of the Israelites — as examples:

**The seven weeks** of the Omer period contain many different days, some holy and exciting, others seemingly mundane and ordinary. On one side we have the days of Passover, seven Shabbats, Rosh Chodesh, and the deeply mystical holiday of Lag B'Omer; and then we have the "back to dull work" day and the rest of the run-of-the-mill days. But as concerns the counting of the Omer, each of these

days has the exact same value: one day in the journey towards Shavuot. This is because no matter the external qualities (or non-qualities) that any given day may possess, in essence every day is a carbon copy of the day that just passed and the day to follow. Every day is a gift from Gd, and we are intended to use it, maximize it to its utmost in His service. How we are to serve Him on any particular day will vary — some days we serve Gd by going to work, and on other days we serve Him by abstaining from work. Some days we serve Him by eating, and on others we serve Him by fasting. Counting days allows us to focus on what unites them all, their common factor and purpose.

**The same is true** with regards to counting Jews. As a nation we are far from a homogenous group. This is true in all areas — and our service of Gd is no exception. Depending on our unique talents, some of us serve Gd through assiduous Torah study, others through volunteering time in public service, others through financially supporting worthy causes, and yet others through reciting Psalms with devotion and sincerity. Leaders and followers. Old and young. Men and women. Scholars and laymen. Every segment of our nation, and indeed every individual person, serves Gd in his or her unique way.

And the counting of the Jews teaches us that the service of any one person isn't more or less important than the service of another. One's service may be more attractive, flashy and attention-grabbing than another's — but at the core we are all involved in the same pursuit — serving our Creator with all the talents and resources available to us.

**All these countings** lead to Shavuot, the day when we were given the Torah, the ultimate equalizer.

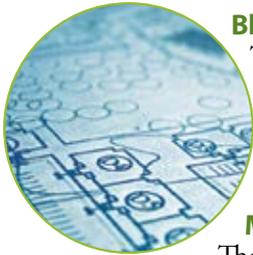
The essence and purpose of all of creation is Gd's desire for a physical abode, an earthly realm which would be transformed into a hospitable habitat where His essence could be expressed. It is the Torah that a) reveals to us this divine plan; b) contains the mitzvot, the tools with which we bring this purpose to realization; and thus c) brings harmony and equality to all of creation — for it shows us how every one of its myriads of components is essentially identical, for they all have one purpose.

**As Shavuot approaches,** let us take this message to heart. Every person counts. Every day counts. Every component of creation counts. And we should be counting our blessings that we were given the Torah — without which nothing would count.

*Adapted from an Article by Naftali Silberberg - Chabad.org*



tangible reality. On the other hand, what is ordinarily “seen” – the material world – was something merely “heard,” to be accepted or rejected at will.



**Blueprint**

The Torah is the blueprint by which the world was designed. Everything that exists can be found in the Torah. Furthermore, “In any one concept of Torah you can find the entire world.”

**Mitzvot**

The 613 Mitzvos (Commandments) are compared to a thick rope woven of 613 thin strands. They parallel the “rope” of the downward flow from G-d that connects the *neshama* (soul) invested in a human body with G-d. (Rabbi Schneur Zalman of Liadi)



**A Scale**

A person should view himself, and the entire world, as being equally balanced between good and bad... By



doing even a single mitzvah, he could tip the scales for himself and the entire world for the good, and bring himself and everyone else redemption and deliverance. (Maimonides)

**The Torah — G-d Given**

Rabbi Akiva said: Was Moses an expert hunter (that he knew so much about animals)?! Rather, the Torah recorded this (the detailed names of different species of animals, fowl and fish,) in response to anyone who might claim that the Torah is not from Heaven.



**Given in the Desert**

The Torah was given to us in the barren, ownerless desert to emphasize that no man may claim any superior right to the world of G-d. It is equally the heritage of every Jew, man, woman and child, equally accessible to the accomplished scholar and the most simple of Jews.

**Daily Heavenly Echo**

Our Sages declare: “Every day an echo resounds from Mount Horeb (Sinai) and proclaims: ‘Woe to those who insult the Torah...’”

Asked Rabbi Israel Baal Shemtov: Has anyone heard this echo? To what purpose, then, is this proclamation if no one hears it?

But often a person is seized by a feeling that has no identifiable source or cause. He may be struck by a sudden joy, or fear, or regret. He may suddenly resolve to better himself, to rectify a deficient past and turn a new leaf in his life. He may be suddenly driven to embark on a new initiative in his spiritual development. From where do these unprovoked awakenings come?

Every day an echo resounds from Mount Horeb.

**49 Days of Counting**

Upon their leaving Egypt, when Moses related to the Jewish people that G-d will give them the Torah, the Jewish people were extremely eager and impatiently counted the days. Hence the Mitzvah of counting the 49 days between Pesach and Shavuot. ●



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# Unplugged

**LIFE WAS DIFFERENT THEN.** "Social networking" meant that people visited each other. Leaving a "message" meant depositing a handwritten note. "Blackberries" were eaten, only birds "twittered"; and your "facebook" was an album of monochrome lithographs.

**But that was before** the "Net" and the "Web": Ironically, the modern usage of these two terms hasn't drifted much from the traditional one. Nets were always used to trap living beings, and webs were sticky and nasty places where predators lurked.

**Don't get me wrong.** I love technology. In fact, like a billion other people on this planet, I love it so much that I find it hard to be without it. You might even call me nomophobic.

**Nomophobia** (a real word) is the fear of being out of mobile phone contact. According to a British study of over 2,000 cell phone users, most people are as stressed by things like running out of battery power or having no network coverage, as they are by wedding-day jitters or getting a root canal. Many psychiatrists believe that technology and Internet obsessions rank right up there with kleptomania and addictive gambling.

**I decided to survey** my family members during dinner to find out if the whole concern is overblown. To my clarion call of "Supper!" the responses were: "I'll be there soon, I've got to finish an e-mail"; "Sorry, honey, I'm in a teleconference"; and

"Dad, can you help me with the router?" As they climbed out, over the next two hours, from their various and sundry electropits, I asked their opinions. "Bah!" "That's ridiculous": "Not me!" "What are you talking about? I own my technology. It doesn't own me. By the way, can I have a new iPod?"

**If we are looking** to reclaim our lives, we have to learn to get unplugged. Noting employee burnout and declines in productivity, some companies have enforced new policies, like keeping inboxes empty and instituting technology-free days.

**Now, that's progress.** On the other hand, did we really need a big, fat study by a high-paid management consultant to come up with a solution like that? The answer has been under our Jewish noses for ages. It's called Shabbat. Once a week, tidy up your house, turn off your electronics, stop all work, and enjoy yourself with family and friends over candlelight and wine, a good book, interesting conversation - in short, recharge your batteries before plugging into another week of spending all your time fighting timesaving devices.

**While you're unplugged** this Shabbat, try thinking about this: There's another sphere of consciousness out there besides the Internet, and it's infinitely bigger, faster and wiser. You are connected to it constantly through your soul, a kind of implanted G-d chip, which interfaces perfectly and naturally with your whole body.

**Your soul comes** with an instruction manual, the Torah; a multiple lifetime warranty; and troubleshooting support from the friendly lifestyle technicians who have studied and practiced the manual, who will show you how to keep connected at all times.

*From Chabad.org by Arnie Gotfryd*



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# SHAVUOS Customs

## Pull an All-Nighter

Our Sages relate that our ancestors slept late the morning they received the Torah. How could that have happened? They so anxiously awaited that occasion. They sincerely, but mistakenly thought that they would be best able to receive the Torah if their souls were not constrained by the physical body, and able to tap into subconscious realms beyond the normal human mind.



They didn't realize that ultimately G-d wants us to utilize the mundane, everyday experience, the physical, in order to make this world a holy place where He can "reside".

To compensate for that mistake we stay up the entire first night of Shavuos and study Torah, ready to receive the Torah once more when G-d again offers it to us, this Shavuos, with renewed vigor.

## Dairy Foods & Blintzes

It is customary to eat dairy foods on the first day of Shavuos. One of the reasons given for this custom is because the Torah is likened to nourishing milk.

Also, on Shavuos, immediately after receiving the Torah, the Jewish people were required to eat kosher. The only foods available for immediate consumption were milk products.

The Hebrew word for milk is "chalav". When the numerical value of each of the Hebrew letters in the word "chalav" are added together – 8; 30; 2 – the total is 40. 40 is the number of days Moses spend on Mount Sinai when receiving the Torah.

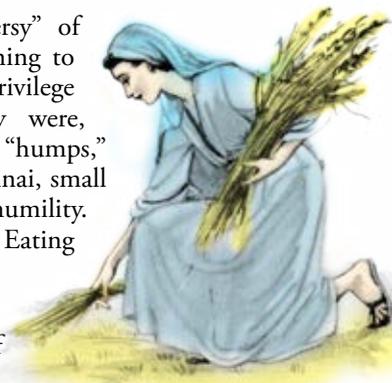
The custom to eat cheese blintzes on Shavuos is based on a play of Hebrew words. The Hebrew word for cheese is Gevinah,



reminding us of the "controversy" of the taller mountains, each claiming to be worthier than Sinai for the privilege of receiving the Torah. They were, therefore, called Gavnunim - "humps," because of their conceit, while Sinai, small and humble, was chosen for its humility. (See article "A Deep Reason for Eating Cheesecake," Page 16).

## Ruth

In many synagogues the book of Ruth is read on the second day of Shavuos. There are several reasons for this custom: A) Shavuos is the birthday and yahrzeit (day of passing) of King David, and the book of Ruth records his ancestry. Boaz and Ruth were King David's great grandparents. B) The scenes of harvesting, described in the book of Ruth, are appropriate to the Festival of Harvest. C) Ruth was a sincere convert who embraced Judaism with all her heart. On Shavuos all Jews were converts having unconditionally accepted the Torah and all of its precepts.



## Go Green

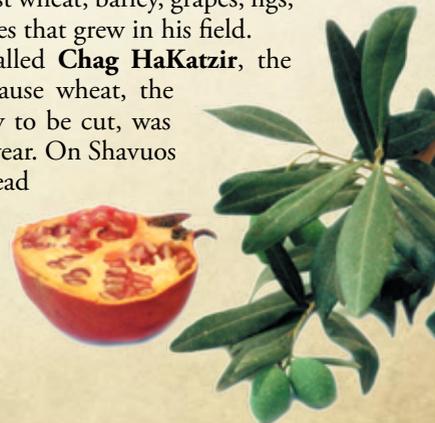
It is customary on Shavuos to adorn the synagogue and home with fruits, greens and flowers. The reason: **Fruits** - In the time of the Temple the first fruits of harvest were brought to the Temple beginning on Shavuos. **Greens** - Our Sages taught that on Shavuos judgment is rendered regarding the trees of the field. **Flowers** - Our Sages taught that although Mount Sinai was situated in a desert, in honor of the Torah, the desert bloomed and sprouted flowers.

## Additional Names of Shavuos

Shavuos is also called **Atzeret**, meaning – The Completion, because together with Passover it forms the completion of a unit. We gained our freedom on Passover in order to receive the Torah on Shavuos.

Another name for Shavuos is **Yom Habikurim** or the Day of the First Fruits. In an expression of thanks to G-d, beginning on Shavuos, each farmer in the Land of Israel brought to the Temple the first wheat, barley, grapes, figs, pomegranates, olives and dates that grew in his field.

Finally, Shavuos is also called **Chag HaKatzir**, the Festival of the Harvest, because wheat, the last of the grains to be ready to be cut, was harvested at this time of the year. On Shavuos two loaves of wheat bread from the new harvest were offered at the temple in Jerusalem. ●



# The Inside Reason for Cheesecake

## QUESTION:

What's behind the custom of eating dairy products on Shavuot? What's the connection between the giving of the Torah at Mt Sinai and eating milk products? (I'm not complaining, I love cheesecake - I'm just looking for a deep spiritual excuse to eat more.)

## ANSWER:

Milk is actually refined blood. In a complex and wondrous process, the mammary glands transform blood into pure white milk.

There's something supernatural about that. To take a liquid as pungent and distasteful as blood, and convert it into a nourishing and drinkable food is nothing short of miraculous. We can simulate this miracle in our own lives.



Blood represents raw animalistic passion and untamed instinct. Milk is a symbol of refinement and purity of character. Making milk out of blood - refining our lower instincts - is our life goal. The Torah introduced a radical new path to achieve this goal - the divine commandments. Through engaging in simple acts of goodness and sanctity, we can tame our animalistic instincts and align ourselves with the divine. With each individual act we elevate ourselves and our world another step, gradually transforming a rough and untamed existence into a home for G-d.

We can turn our "blood" into "milk".

• • •

I also love cheesecake. As we eat it, let's remember the message behind it - that the Torah was given to transform our selfish appetites into an appetite for giving; to turn our blood, which is just for ourselves, into milk, the one thing the body produces just to give to another.

*Adapted from an Article by Aron Moss  
-Chabad.org*

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# CLASSIC CHEESE BLINTZES

Blintzes are a traditional dish for the holiday of Shavuos. Top with sour cream, apple sauce or cinnamon and sugar.

## BATTER

4 eggs  
1/2 cup milk  
1/2 cup water  
1 cup flour  
1/4 cup sugar  
1 package vanilla sugar  
Pinch of salt  
1 Tbsp. oil

## CHEESE FILLING I

1/2 pound farmer cheese  
4 ounces cream cheese  
4 Tbsps. honey or maple syrup  
juice of 1/2 lemon  
1 egg yolk

## CHEESE FILLING II

1 pound cottage cheese, strained  
2 egg yolks  
2 Tbsps. flour  
2 Tbsps. sugar  
1 tsp. vanilla sugar  
1/4 cup raisins (optional)

USE: 7 inch skillet

YIELDS: 12 blintzes

**BATTER:** In a large mixer bowl combine eggs, milk, water and blend well. Gradually add flour, then both sugars, salt and oil. Beat well until there are no lumps in the batter.

**FILLING I:** Combine all ingredients in a bowl and beat well. Or combine all the ingredients in a blender container and blend until smooth.

**FILLING II:** Combine all ingredients, except raisins, in a bowl and beat well. Or all the ingredients can be combined in a blender container and blended until smooth. Then add raisins.

## TO ASSEMBLE CREPES:

1. Prepare batter and filling of your choice. Using a paper towel or basting brush, apply a thin coating of oil to a 7 inch skillet. Place skillet over medium heat until skillet is hot but not smoking.

2. Ladle approximately 1/3 cup of batter into the skillet. Tilt pan to swirl the batter so it covers the bottom of the skillet.

3. Fry on one side until small air bubbles form, and top is set. Bottom should be golden brown. When done, carefully loosen edges of crepe and slip out of skillet onto a plate..

4. Repeat the above procedure until all the batter is used. Grease the skillet as needed..

5. Turn each crepe so that golden brown side is up. Place 3 tablespoons of filling on one edge in a 2 1/2 inch long by 1-inch wide mound..

6. Roll once to cover filling. Fold the sides into the center and continue rolling until completely closed..

7. Heat 2 tablespoons of oil in the skillet and place each crepe seam side down in the skillet and fry 2 minutes on each side, turning once.

**VARIATION:** Whole wheat pastry flour can be used instead of white flour.

*Excerpted from Spice and Spirit, The Complete Kosher Jewish Cookbook, published by Lubavitch Women's Cookbook Publications.*

# EGGPLANT ROLLATINI

A delicious dairy Shavuos dish.



## EGGPLANT AND CHEESE STUFFING:

3 medium eggplants, about 3 lbs.

Olive oil

16 oz Ricotta cheese

2 cups of your favorite prepared marinara sauce or create your own.

1/2 cup shredded Mozzarella cheese

2 garlic cloves, minced

5 basil leaves, shredded

1 egg, lightly beaten

Salt and pepper to taste

**For the eggplant and stuffing:** Preheat broiler to high. Remove the tops of the eggplants. Cut into 1/4 to 1/2-inch thick slices vertically, from top to bottom. Brush a large baking sheet with a little olive oil. Place the slices, in batches, on the sheet. Season lightly with salt and

pepper, drizzle with a little olive oil. Place on rack 4-inches from broiler and broil until lightly browned and softened, about 4 minutes per side. Remove and let cool slightly.

Meanwhile, prepare the cheese stuffing. In a medium bowl, mix together the ricotta and mozzarella cheeses. Add the garlic, basil, eggs, salt and pepper. Mix well to combine.

**To assemble:** Preheat oven to 375 degrees F. Lightly grease a 13x9x2-inch baking pan with spray or olive oil. Spread about 1/4 cup of the sauce in the bottom of the pan. Spoon about 2 tablespoons of the cheese mixture on the short end of an eggplant slice and roll. Place in baking pan, seam side down. Continue with the remaining eggplant slices and cheese. Spread 1 cup of the remaining sauce on top and bake until hot and bubbly, 20 to 30 minutes. Remove from oven and let rest about 5 minutes before serving.

For additional Shavuos recipes visit [www.chabadwi.org/shavuos](http://www.chabadwi.org/shavuos).

# THE PERFECT QUARREL

## *The On-going Holiday Disagreement*

**RECORDED IN A BOOK** that sold to date well over six billion copies, topping the charts as the best-seller of all time - this non-fiction work chronicles the perfect romance; one which took place between the Author and His beloved bride, the Jewish people.

The wedding day was set for the sixth of Sivan (the third month on the Jewish calendar). The venue was Mount Sinai, the menu was dairy, and the invite list included all the cosmos. They married on that historic day; the marriage has lasted three thousand years and counting. There were many hiccups on the way, as any good marriage would have, and much work was necessary to ensure its survival.

It is through the lens of this union that all future ones can be seen, for they all are rooted in that very matrimony. Over the millennia, scholars have examined this relationship from every angle, and have used it as a source of countless relationship tips. Understanding the dynamics of this cosmic relationship can greatly benefit every marriage.

Interestingly, though, this relationship has, from its very inception, been plagued by a quarrel between the spouses. As is common with many couples, they find themselves continuously and constantly arguing the same argument. In this instance, the couple can never come to a consensus regarding the naming, and the significance, of noteworthy dates and milestones in their relationship.

Let us chronicle the history of this disagreement.

### **Love at First Sight**

The relationship took root during the bride's difficult sojourn in the land of Egypt. That is when, like a knight in shining armor, the Groom rode into her life and saved her from the clutches of a tyrannical ruler. Since then they celebrate what you might call their very first date on the fifteenth day of Nissan, a holiday on which they relive and re-experiences the love at first sight they experienced on that fateful date.

As far as the name of the holiday is concerned, however, the bride and the Groom don't exactly see eye to eye. While disagreements are not an uncommon phenomenon amongst young couples, the point of difference between this couple is very uncommon indeed. In the Torah, the Groom chooses to name this holiday Chag Hamatzot, "the Holiday of Matzot"; the bride prefers the name Pesach, or Passover.

The name "Holiday of Matzot" recalls the unswerving loyalty the bride had to her Groom. Matzah is a product of



the dough that had no time to rise due to the hurriedness of the exodus. It speaks of the bride's readiness to travel into the wilderness, far away from civilized life and its comforts and stability, with no knowledge of her destination and how she might reach it. Only someone deeply in love would follow her loved one the way this bride followed her Groom. As such, the Groom prefers the name "Matzot," to highlight and forever be reminded of His beloved bride's unshakable faithfulness.

In admirable disagreement the bride chooses to call it Passover, in commemoration of her Groom's unconditional allegiance to her, His undeserving betrothed, which He demonstrated when He "passed over" and spared the bride's homes during the course of the Plague of the Firstborn.

The Jewish nation had sadly been influenced by Egyptian culture and practices which were steeped in polytheism and idolatry. However, G-d's love for his bride – a love, which transcended rhyme and reason, good and bad, astonishingly even withstood unfaithfulness.

This was a love of no condition, and it is this love that the bride seeks to highlight on the night when she recalls His passing over her.

### **What to Name the Anniversary?**

This exact difference of opinion resurfaced come the following holiday, celebrated on the sixth of Sivan. The Groom dubbed the festival "Shavuot," while the bride, in her prayers, refers to it as Z'man Matan Toratenu—the "Time of the Giving of the Torah."

Shavuot means "weeks," and refers to the Biblical command to count seven weeks from Passover onwards, the conclusion of which is celebrated with a holiday. According to the Kabbalists, this physical count is paralleled by a spiritual count, whereby each day is not just counted but is made to count, as we progress on a spiritual journey of self-refinement. Each day of the Omer we labor on internalizing our spiritual gifts. As we progress with our character elevation, we become deserving and worthy of the gift – the Torah – that we receive on Shavuot each year.

The Groom seeks to underscore our commitment to His service. This is what He celebrates. And that's why He calls the day "Shavuot"; recalling the seven-week period of love and devotion embarked upon by His affectionate bride.

The bride, however, maintains the opposite: the holiday has nothing to do with her and has everything to do with Him. She feels that no matter how much she accomplishes in the seven weeks, her finite service cannot possibly earn her the infinite treasure of light that Gd generously gifts her with each year. Hence she's fond of calling it "the Time of the Giving of Torah."

*Adapted from an Article by Mendel Kalmenson - Chabad.org*



# Where Can I Receive the Torah Today?

Wednesday, May 15, 2013

Each year on the holiday of Shavuot this historic event is reenacted, as G-d offers us His gift of the Torah with greater and more intensified love.

Every Jewish man, woman and child should make every effort to be present in the synagogue as the Ten Commandments are read from the Torah.

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Morning Service – 10:00am  
Ten Commandments – 11:15am  
Dairy Kiddush Buffet – 12:00pm  
3030 E. Kenwood Blvd.  
(414) 961-6100 ext. 205

### CHABAD OF MEQUON

Morning Service – 10:00am  
Ten Commandments – 11:15am & 4:00pm  
Dairy Kiddush to Follow Both Readings  
2233 W. Mequon Rd. • (262) 242-2235

### MADISON

Morning Service – 10:00am  
Ten Commandments – 11:00am  
1722 Regent St. • (608) 231-3450

### YJP MADISON

Community Reading  
& Dairy Buffet – 5:00pm  
18 Firestone Ct.  
(608) 203-8014

### UW-MADISON

Torah Reading & Dairy & Ice  
Cream Buffet – 6:30pm  
223 W. Gilman St.  
(608) 257-1757

### CHABAD OF THE BAY AREA

Morning Service – 10:00am  
Ten Commandments – 11:00am  
Ten Commandments  
& Dairy Desserts – 6:30pm  
220 Bellevue St.  
(920) 288-2252

### KENOSHA

Morning Service – 10:00am  
Ten Commandments – 11:15am  
Ten Commandments, Ice Cream  
Party & Dairy Dinner – 15:30pm  
6522 - 87th Ave.  
(262) 359-0770

### CHABAD OF WAUKESHA

Ten Commandments – 5:00pm  
Dairy Buffet & Ice Cream Party  
for Kids to Follow  
1222 E. Broadway  
(262) 563-9770

*For other services, check your synagogue schedule.*



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#### Week 1: June 24th to June 28th

**Specialty:** Tae Kwon Do, Food Art, Lacrosse, Art  
**Sports:** Basketball, Swimming\*  
**Field Trip:** Action Territory  
**Extra Curricular:** Orientation Bash (June 23rd)

#### Week 2: July 1st to July 5th (no camp July 4th)

**Specialty:** Balloon Twisting, Woodworking, Disc Golf, Art  
**Sport:** Football, Swimming\*  
**Field Trips:** Pioneers and Trail Blazers Overnight @ Plymouth Rock (July 2nd), Boating On Elkhart Lake, Flabbergast

#### Week 3: July 8th to July 12th

**Specialty:** Balloon Twisting, Woodworking, Disc Golf, Art  
**Sport:** Soccer  
**Field Trips:** Baseball vs. CGI Chicago, Betty Brinn Children's Museum, Bowling, Bear Den Zoo, Golf, Brewers Game, Dunk Tank  
**Extra Curricular:** Family Picnic (July 10th)

#### Week 4: July 15th to July 19th (no camp July 16th)

**Specialty:** CGI Book of World Records, Dog Training, Flag Football, Art  
**Sports:** Softball, Swimming\*

**Field Trips:** Adventure Rock, Laser Tag, Petting Zoo  
**Extra Curricular:** Family Shabbat Dinner (July 19th)

#### Week 5: July 22nd to July 26th

**Specialty:** Leatherworking, Disc Golf, Mini-Chefs, Art  
**Sports:** Kickball, Swimming\*  
**Field Trips:** Skateland, Fishing  
**Extra Curricular:** Sr. Girls Shabbaton (July 26th)

#### Week 6: July 29th to August 2nd

**Specialty:** Lego Robotics, Track and Field, Mini-Chefs, Art  
**Sport:** Field and Floor Hockey, Swimming\*  
**Field Trips:** Nature Hike and Action Territory  
**Extra Curricular:** Sr. Boys Shabbaton (August 2nd)

#### Week 7: August 5th to August 9th

**Specialty:** David Stokes & Face Painting  
**Sports:** Wacky Sports, Swimming\*  
**Field Trips:** Little A-Merrick-A, Great America, Beach Day  
**Extra Curricular:** Pioneers Overnight @ Great America and Late Night for Trailblazers (August 7th)

*\*Lessons are optional for an additional fee*



In honor of the Upcoming 19th Yahrzeit anniversary of Rebbe, Rabbi Menachem M. Schneerson, OBM, (on the 3rd of Tammuz/June 11, 2013) and in gratitude of his vision and gift of love, we present the following amazing story.

## TEN MINUTES THAT CHANGED A DESTINY

*As told by Freddy Hager*

**W**hen one developed a relationship with the Rebbe – I think this is true for most people – it helped one realize more about oneself. It was like meeting yourself.

The second time I met the Rebbe in *Yechidus* (private audience) was in the winter of 1970. Many of us from England flew over especially for the occasion of the 20th anniversary of the previous Rebbe's passing and the Rebbe's succession to the leadership on the 10th of Shevat.

I had met the Rebbe five months earlier and did not expect to meet him again in private at this time. But then, the Rebbe's secretary called me and said that the Rebbe wants to see all the guests in private.

There were hundreds of people who would see the Rebbe that evening. It was a ten minute *yechidus*, which was much shorter than the previous time. The Rebbe asked me, "What do the students in London University do about kosher food?"

I responded, "Well, they are now rebuilding Hillel

House; it'll be finished in October and then there will be facilities for kosher meals."

This was January, 1970.

The Rebbe looked at me, a piercing look...and said, "So tell me: Until October is it permissible to eat non kosher food?"

I felt very, very foolish.

"As far as I understand," the Rebbe – who for all I know, never ever visited London – continued, "the University of London is not a typical university campus with all the colleges in one location, but the colleges are spread out and dotted around parts of the town; so would it not be correct to say that only a committed student who is specifically looking for Kosher food will come to the Hillel House?"

Of course, I agreed.

"So", the Rebbe continued, "What is being done about the other students?"

Silence from yours truly...

The Rebbe then said, "Wouldn't it be a good idea to

make a meal service and actively invite people to come and eat Kosher food?"

I got very enthusiastic and warmed to the theme and said, "That's a wonderful idea! And we could have lectures and guest speakers and bring the students closer to yiddishkeit..."

The Rebbe held up his hand and said, "That's very nice and it may be a good idea, but that's not what I have in mind. My idea is purely that a Jewish boy while eating a kosher meal should sit next to a Jewish girl, rather than eating a non-kosher meal next to a non-Jewish girl."

I told the Rebbe "We'll do it." And we did it.

I came back to London and talked to a friend of mine, a very enthusiastic young man and we arranged a meal service. We collaborated with one of the then major restaurants in London and they delivered meals to three colleges: London School of Economics, Kings College and Imperial College in London. And the service went on for many years. I think, in some sort of transmuted way, it still continues.

The service was a tremendous success. We used to go out two or three times a week raising funds because it needed a

THE REBBE LOOKED AT ME, A PIERCING LOOK...AND SAID, "SO TELL ME: UNTIL OCTOBER IS IT PERMISSIBLE TO EAT NON KOSHER FOOD?"

lot of subsidy and I think I did more of that than studying at university....

This was the result of one ten minute yechidus! And it was only part of the ten minutes... It was a monumental, cataclysmic idea which must have changed many peoples' lives.

I was thinking, there are a number of leaders, Rabbis, Deans of schools of higher Jewish learning, who worry about their communities and schools – and that's great, that's very laudable and wonderful, and we need more leaders like that.

But the Rebbe had a breadth. He was concerned about the wider world. He was concerned about people that he'd never met, that he may possibly never meet, but that concerned him, and it wouldn't let him sleep and it wouldn't let him rest until he did something about it...

*Used with permission from JEM. Here's My Story is a weekly story for the Shabbos table, excerpted from the My Encounter with the Rebbe oral history project.*

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# The Triumph of Chabad

By Ashley Rindsberg

It was another year's *chagim* (holidays) spent abroad, away from Israel where Rosh Hashanah and Yom Kipur (and Simcha Torah and Simchat Torah and Succot...) are a matter of course; where in a spiritual analog of the Soviet agents who once visited America and pointing in any direction were astonished to be taken to a supermarket stuffed with food, so in Israel in any direction that can be pointed to a synagogue lies; where the Days of Awe do not require instructions on the packaging: It was another year for me away from those kinds of comfort.

This year's Yom Kipur found me in Australia. The year before was South Africa. The year before that the south of France, and the year before that Central America. (Yes, I get around.) In all these places, the *chagim* are an issue — of security, of buying tickets, in other words of potentially being turned away by a shul packed to capacity and made nervous by all too recent experiences of bombings, stabbings, riots, and various other attacks.

Three years ago in Honduras, where I traveled from Nicaragua since the Sandanistas had burned that country's last synagogue and no Torah scroll survived, a coup erupted and I had to flee the country at 4 in the morning when the 24 hour-a-day military curfew was lifted for a few hours so people could buy food.

I crossed the border, never so happy to return

to Nicaragua. But I realized I would spend the chag alone, without a shul or a minyan, or a Torah. So I printed out as many pages as possible of a machzor I found online, and on the day of the holiday took the pages into a mountain forest where I guiltily read from them, feeling the inadequacy of such a "service."

This year, to forefend as much of that guilt as possible, I bought a beautiful edition of the Art Scroll Machzor, but also a copy of Shai Agnon's (Israel's literary Nobel laureate), precious and near-holy work, *Days of Awe*. The introduction to the book notes that Agnon spent two and a half years working 16 hours a day to compile the passages of Scripture, midrashim, commentary and tales that constitute what has been called an almost essential accessory to the High Holidays machzor.

In the book, Agnon relates the tale of a man who just before Yom Kipur had gotten lost in a forest in Europe. Having no machzor, no sidur, (and no internet to print either from), he did the only thing that he could do: he said the Hebrew alphabet aloud, sending the letters up to God and let Him put them in the right order.

In another story Agnon relates, a man lost in the forest came across another Jew, also lost in the forest. (GPS-less Jews were forever getting lost in European forests, it seems.) The first asked the second which was the way-out. The second said he did not know. "But this I can tell you," he said. "Do not take the way I have been taking, for that will lead you astray. And now let us look for a way out together."

In France last year, my situation was considerably better than that of any of the two Jews lost in the forest, but also better than my own situation not lost in the forest (but almost lost), and certainly better than holed up in a Tegucigalpa hotel as gunfire and tear gas erupted around me.

There in France, I found the local synagogue,

and after an appropriately intense haranguing by Israel-trained security, I made my way in. It was not a Chabad synagogue, and most members nodded politely but not much more. There was an exception, a Jewish man with a Southern accent who came up to me exclaiming, “You’re not from around here!” and promptly invited me to his home.

Upon my inquiry, this man, Daniel, a righteous man if I’ve ever met one, told me where the local Chabad shul was. There I went, meeting a group of young French Jews who whisked me to one of their homes for Rosh Hashanah dinner, where I listened to them debate intensely about their community, about leaving France for Israel (and about the possibility of riding the tram on Shabbat). The next day in shul the Chabad rabbi offered me — a stranger — an aliyah to the Torah on one of the calendar’s holiest days.

This year I called the Chabad center in Sydney to find out about services. The woman on the phone, without so much as seeing my face, invited me for a meal at her home before the holiday, and told me where I could attend Kol Nidre and the Yom Kipur service.

I walked to the Chabad shul in an elegant Sydney neighborhood, and after another security-minded haranguing (there were bloody Islamist riots in the city just weeks ago), I was welcomed in. The rabbi, the gabbai, the cantor, and the shul’s members greeted me, asked where I was from and wished *gmar chatima tovah* (a good and sweet year). One of the members, who seemed to play an important role at the shul, hugged me at the end of the chag, wishing me a sweet year (and, one day, a beautiful bride). And the Jewish man who conducted security apologized profusely, and graciously, for the duty he had to perform.

It was here that I realized the full significance —

IT WAS HERE THAT  
I REALIZED THE FULL  
SIGNIFICANCE... THERE’S  
NO LONGER A PLACE IN THE  
WORLD WHERE A JEW CAN BE  
LOST IN A FOREST... IN THE  
WIDE SWATHS OF CHINA,  
IN PATAGONIA, IN SAN  
JOSE — AND IN OUR OWN  
BACKYARDS, IN LOS ANGELES,  
MONTREAL AND NEW YORK...  
— EVERY JEW HAS A HOME.

the triumph — of the Rebbe’s innovation. There is no longer a place in the world where a Jew can be lost in a forest, metaphorically speaking. In the wide swaths of China, in Patagonia, in San Jose — and in our own backyards, in Los Angeles, Montreal and New York, even in Tel Aviv — every Jew has a home. Every Jew has a place. No Jew has to find himself in a moment of despair, thinking, in his loneliness, “What’s the point?”

In discussions of Chabad, the Big Question of the Messiah issue always arises: it is not my presumption to offer any opinion about it. I can’t adjudicate on matters as weighty as those. But without referring to him as such, we can say that Rabbi Schneerson was a kind of social messiah, who has ushered in a new era of community for the Jewish people, which has irrevocably changed the world for the Jews.

The two Jews lost in the forest in Europe found each other, and in this they found a community. But more importantly, they both realized that their personal paths were not the right one to continue to pursue. They had to look in a different direction for their salvation.

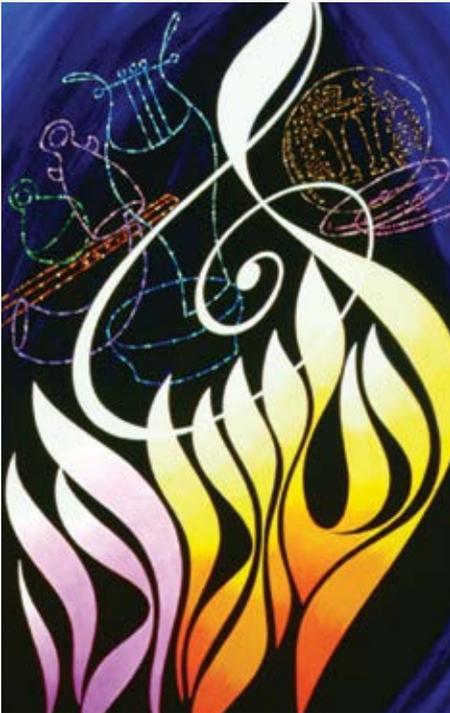
Sitting alone in a forest in Nicaragua three years ago, I could pray on Yom Kipur. I could throw words and letters into the air, and perhaps they would be heard and assembled. But I could never find guidance. I could never ask a question and receive an answer. Chabad has changed that. We may not know with precision the way forward, but knowing the way from which we came, and from which others have come, we can know that the past is not the way forward and that the future is not alone.

*Published on Jerusalem Post Blog*

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The Rebbe

**Rabbi Menachem M. Schneerson,**  
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***Whose vision and programs  
continue to steer Jewish conscience.***

on the eve of his 19th Yahrzeit,  
(Tuesday, Third of Tammuz/ June 11, 2013)

GUEST SPEAKER

**RABBI YOSEF ROSENBLUM**

Rabbi Yosef Rosenblum is an innovative educator and administrator. Under his leadership the school, Achei Tmimim of Pittsburg, PA, was recognized as a Blue Ribbon School of Excellence by the U.S. Department of Education. Author of *The Sefer HaMitzvos for Children*, this publication is widely used by Jewish schools the world over as part of their curriculum. Partnering with leading educators and scholars, and using advanced techniques such as Differentiated Instructions (DI) and Understanding By Design (UBD), he developed a ground-breaking Talmud teaching methodology. Rabbi Rosenblum is a popular lecturer on education, parenting, Jewish Mysticism, Talmud and more.

**Richard and Dr.  
Nina Florsheim**  
*My Experience with the Rebbe*

SONGS LED BY  
**Rabbi Levi Emmer**  
*joined by the Chassidim*

MUSIC BY  
**Zoe Biller**

*Light Buffet Dinner*

For more information on the Rebbe and Gimmel Tammuz visit [www.chabad.org](http://www.chabad.org)

# WHAT'S HAPPENING at Lubavitch of Wisconsin



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## Jewish Beginnings

# From our Mailbox

Rabbi, I would be lost without the Celebrations guide. This year it is like a life preserver being tossed to a drowning me. Thank you.

Rabbi, Our family spent Passover together in Costa Rica far from any Jewish community. Rabbi Mendel Matusof at the UW Chabad gave me a box of Shmura Matzah and a copy of the Celebration magazine. The magazine was incredible in helping us create our own Passover experience. Particularly, it was the message of Passover and exodus in the letter from the Lubavitcher Rabbi that inspired us while we enjoyed the Matzah and drank the wine.

Dear Rabbi Thaler,  
Thank you! I want you to know that you are appreciated. My grandson is R. M. and he was at your table for the 2nd Seder. He had a wonderful time and also enjoyed the good food. Please accept this small token with my gratitude.  
Thank you again, R. G.

Rabbi, this is A. M. from Bethesda, Maryland. You pasted a note on the thank you letter, asking what my connection was to Lubavitch of Wisconsin. My sister, Rochel, passed away almost 3 years ago; it'll be 3 years this month. And you and your wife kindly invited myself and my son for Shabbos dinner and for luncheon on Saturday after her burial. It's something I will never forget - your kindness in doing so. Both of us were kind of low having lost her. I will never forget it.

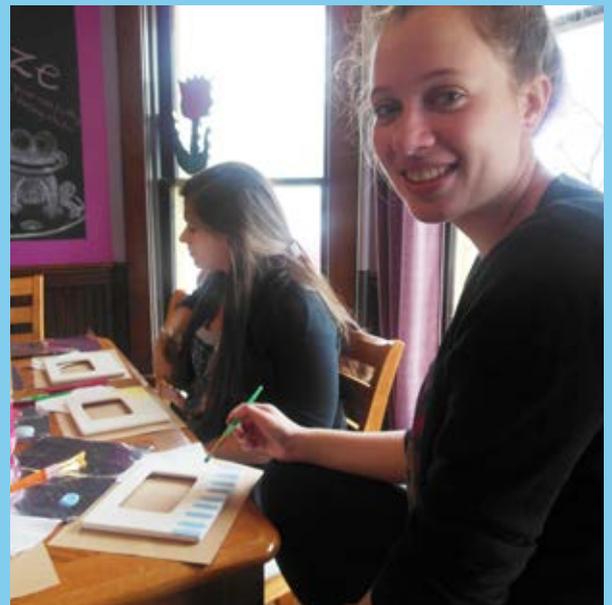
Dear Rabbi,  
Thank you for the recent Celebration Magazine and the newly launched News from Lubavitch below. For 12 years, I've been blessed to be part of this ever expanding community and am so thankful for the personal growth I've enjoyed as a result. Thanks to you and all those who work within the Lubavitch network for guiding me to my Jewish soul. The wholeness I feel from connecting Jewishly via the many opportunities to learn and connect, is a gift I do not take for granted. May you continue to have strength to do this work that touches so many in beautiful and rich ways.



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*JLI Madison*



*Chabad of Waukesha*





# SHAVUOS CALENDAR • 5773/2013

## CANDLE LIGHTING TIMES

	Blessing	Milwaukee	Madison	Kenosha	Green Bay	La Crosse	Beloit	Superior	Wausau	Eau Claire
May 14	#1&2*	7:48	7:54	7:47	7:53	8:04	7:52	8:12	8:01	8:08
May 15	#1&2**	8:57	9:03	8:54	9:03	9:13	8:59	9:25	9:12	9:18
May 16	End of Holiday	8:58	9:04	8:56	9:04	9:14	9:00	9:27	9:13	9:20

\* If lighting after sunset, light only from a pre-existing flame. \*\* Do not light before the time indicated. Light only from a pre-existing flame. A pre-existing flame is a flame that has been burning continuously since the onset of the festival such as a pilot light, gas or candle flame.

## CANDLE LIGHTING BLESSINGS

### 1. BO-RUCH A-TOH ADO-NOI E-LO-HEI-NU ME-LECH HA-OLOM ASHER KID-ESHO-NU BE-MITZVO-SOV VETZI-VONU LE-HAD-LIK NER SHEL YOM TOV

*Blessed are You, Lord our G-d, King of the universe, who has sanctified us with His commandments, and commanded to kindle the light of the Festival day.*

### 2. BO-RUCH A-TOH ADO-NOI E-LO-HEI-NU ME-LECH HO-OLOM SHE-HECHI-YO-NU VE-KI-YE-MO-NU VE-HIGI-O-NU LIZ MAN HA-ZEH.

Blessed are You, Lord our G-d, King of the universe, who has granted us life, sustained us, and enabled us to reach this occasion.



## SHAVUOS SCHEDULE

### Tuesday, May 14

- We light Yom Tov candles (for time see the candle lighting schedule) and say both blessings.
- Like every Shabbos and Jewish festival, we sanctify the day and welcome the festival with the Kiddush, and the family is treated to a festive meal.
- At night we stay up and recite *Tikun Lail Shavuos* (see page 15).



### Wednesday, May 15

- We attend services in the morning and hear the reading of the Ten Commandments.
- As on other holidays, festive meals are eaten and no work may be performed.
- After nightfall, we light Yom Tov candles from a pre-existing flame (at the time indicated above in the candle lighting schedule) and say both blessings.
- Once more, we recite Kiddush in the evening and the family is seated to partake in a festive meal.



### Thursday, May 16

- We attend services in the morning.
- As on other holidays, festive meals are eaten and no work may be performed.
- *Yizkor* is recited during the Yom Tov morning services, in remembrance of the deceased.



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## Shavuot Guide

5773 / 2013

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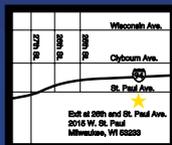
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