

Tikun Leil Shavuot Companion Booklet



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PREFACE

Rabbi Ahron Kramer

In these trying times of Covid19, we are literally writing history. There is very little in the realm of cut-and-paste from previous illnesses to guide us in how to deal with the situation. Illness and death have tragically effected millions of people in the world, with no end in sight. As a result lockdowns have been imposed by governments to help maintain the situation in order to protect hospitals from becoming overwhelmed and to save lives. This has crippled the economies of many countries and destroyed the livelihoods of countless numbers of people. Aside from this, so many areas in life have been severely affected.

This is all very worrying to everyone, causing enormous stress and pressure, and can result in long lasting emotional damage, aside from all the other tragic effects. We all know that worrying does not solve any problems, rather it adds fuel to the fire. The best and healthiest way forward would be for people to handle the situation responsibly, yet at the same time to delve on it as little as possible.

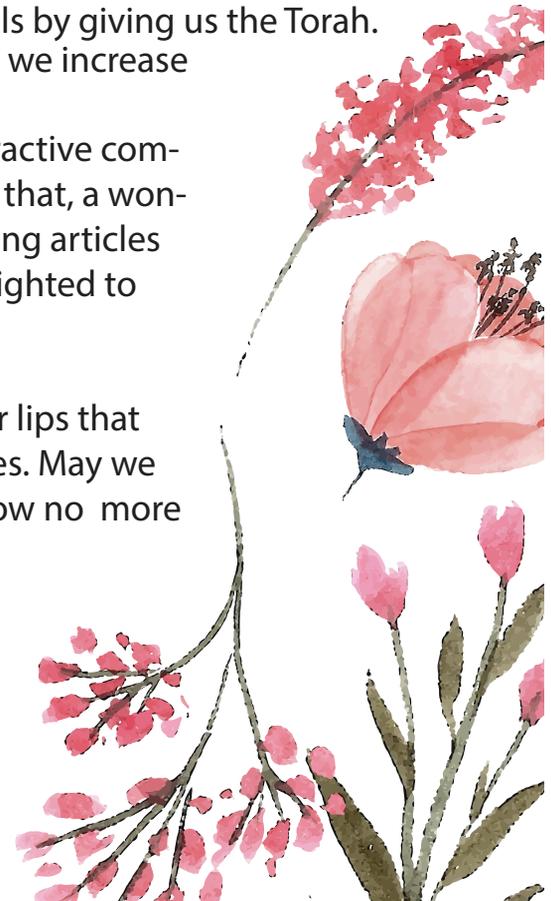
How fortunate are those have an inner life to focus on! A person's mood is controlled by what he/she concentrates on. A Jew's life is constantly spiraling around the Jewish yearly cycle. The pandemic landed on us as we were in the leadup to Purim. The lockdown started in the days prior to Pesach, and so on. We are now celebrating the Yom Tov of Shavuot. If we focus our minds on this cycle, as well as on the day to day life of a Jew, we will be more equipped to travel through this storm in a calmer way.

Shavuot is the time of year that we received the Torah from Hashem, and accepted it upon ourselves. This is the celebration of us actually becoming the Jewish nation, the nation of Hashem. Hashem chose us and freed us from the bondage in Egypt for the purpose of making us his nation, and prescribed what being Jewish entails by giving us the Torah. Therefore Shavuot has traditionally been the holiday in which we increase our Torah study.

In previous years, there has been a full night of organised intractive communal study sessions in one of the Shuls. This year, in place of that, a wonderful initiative was suggested by Rabbi Stroh. Several engaging articles have been written up by a group of people, which we are delighted to present to you, to study over the Chag.

With best wishes for an enjoyable Yom Tov, and prayers on our lips that may Hashem swiftly redeemed us from these very trying times. May we merit the true and complete redemption, in which we will know no more pain or sorrow.

HAPPY READING!!!



Recipes

We know that life is hectic at the moment, but here are a few quick and easy milky recipes from Dobra Baila Kohn, Vardi Dansky and Penina Stroh to enhance your Shavuot.

Cheese Balls

This is a really simple and delicious milky Shavuot treat with no baking required. Younger kids can also enjoy helping you to prepare this.

Ingredients

6oz Vanilla tea biscuits (finely crushed)
250gr Soft Cheese
1/2cup Sugar
1 tsp Vanilla sugar

Method

Mix all ingredients until stiff and roll into balls.

You can then roll in sprinkles and freeze, or freeze for a few hours and then dip into melted chocolate for an extra special treat.



With Shavuot almost upon us, here is a very straightforward, no-fail cheesecake recipe that will take just minutes to whip up!

Ingredients

1lb of cream cheese

4 eggs

1 cup of sugar

1 pie crust

Cheese Cake

Make sure all the ingredients are at room temperature.

Mix the cream cheese, eggs and sugar together thoroughly in a bowl using a fork.

Pour the mixture into the pie crust and bake at 175°C for 1 hour.

Turn the oven off and leave to cool in the oven (this will help it set to a perfect consistency).

Toppings

Top with either:

whipped cream and fresh fruit

pie filling

jelly and fruit

melted chocolate

oreos



Vegetable Quiche

Onions, mushrooms, leek and
courgette rings

2 eggs

1 cup milk

2oz grated cheese

1 tsp corn starch

Salt and pepper to taste



Fry the vegetables then add in
rest of ingredients and mix.

Base

1 cup flour

1 tsp corn starch

Pinch of salt

2 tblsp ice cold water

100 grams margarine

Rub in with finger tips and press

into a round base,

Pour the mixture on top,

Bake at 180° for 45 mins.



SHAVUOT; A BRIEF HALACHIC GUIDE Rabbi Kupperman

As we have designed the booklet as a companion for the whole of Yom Tov, we have placed the parts of the guide in their designated spots throughout the booklet.

Shavuot is probably the most important of all the Festivals in the Jewish calendar. Why? Because all the other Festivals owe their very existence to a singular event that happened on Shavuot! This event was the Sinai Revelation when G-d gave us His Torah where, among other things, we learn about the Festivals.

If not for G-d's Torah we wouldn't even know about the Festivals, and since it was on Shavuot that the Torah was given to us, therefore, it is fair to say that Shavuot is the "Festival of all Festivals".

This year, we probably need to refresh our memory about laws & customs of Shavuot even more than every other year in order to confidentially observe and practice them in spite of our isolation. Also, Shavuot falls on Friday and Shabbat; the last time this particular setup occurred was 11 years ago, which is another reason why we have to refresh our memory about a number of points. Hopefully, you will find this guide clear and user-friendly.

Thursday, May 28, Shavuot Eve

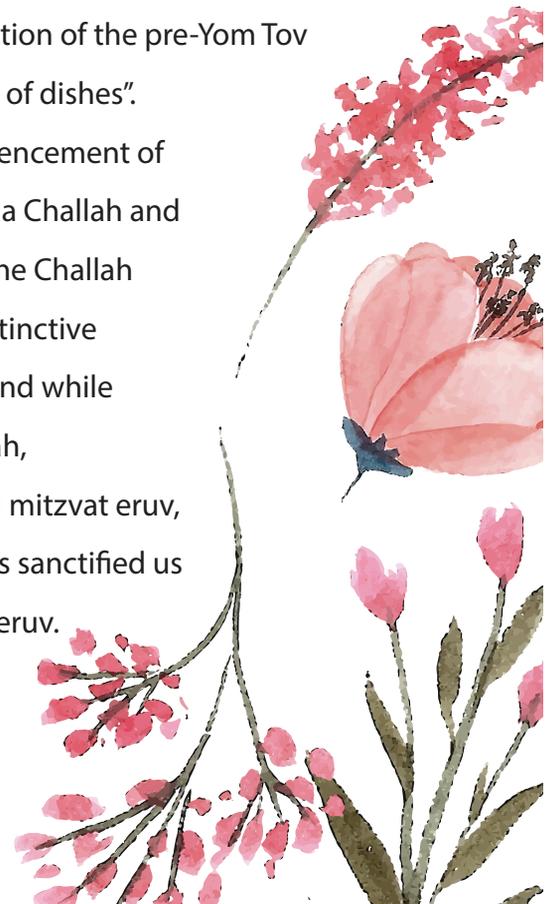
Eruv Tavshilin

Although it is still the eve of the First day of Shavuot we already have to think ahead about the Second day. The Second Day of Shavuot falls on Shabbat, which means that we won't be able to perform many activities which are normally permitted on Yom Tov, such as cooking, boiling water etc. Inevitably we will have to prepare on the First Day for the Second day. The problem is that it is not permitted to prepare on the First Day for the Second Day even if the Second Day coincides with Shabbat.

To remove this prohibition, we have, on the eve of the First day, prepare and set apart some portion of food for Shabbat; by doing so we show that the preparation for Shabbat had started before the Yom Tov and all the further preparations that take place on the Yom Tov are merely a continuation of the pre-Yom Tov preparation. This procedure is called Eruv Tavshilin, which means "mixture of dishes".

To do Eruv Tavshilin, according to the protocol, one has, before the commencement of the Festival, to take some cooked food such as a piece of meat or fish and a Challah and to designate them for Shabbat, by placing the piece of meat or fish with the Challah on a plate (it is a good idea to wrap them in aluminium foil, or another distinctive packaging, to keep them apart from the rest of the foods in your home), and while holding the plate in your hand reciting the following blessing - Baruch atah, Adonai Eloheinu, Melech haolam, asher kid'shanu b'mitzvotav v'tsivanu al mitzvot eruv, which means - Blessed are you, L-rd our G-d, king of the universe, who has sanctified us with His commandments and commanded us concerning the mitzvah of eruv.

After making the blessing one has to make the following declaration (p.642 in the Chief Rabbi's Siddur); By means of this Eruv, it shall be permissible for us to bake, cook, insulate a dish to preserve its heat,



kindle a light, and prepare during the Festival all that is necessary for Shabbat -- for us and for all the Jews who live in this city/town. The food items that had been made Eruv Tavshilin, are kept in the fridge until Shabbat and are eaten during one of the Shabbat meals.

Now, you can continue your preparations for Shabbat during the First Day of the Festival!

An important reminder: The Yom Tov will not commence until 9.04 pm; try to use the unusually long day to find time to get some sleep before Yom Tov - you are going to be awake very late at night!

The First Night of Shavuot, Thursday, May 28, 9.04 pm

Candle lighting

Before lighting the candles for the 1st day of Shavuot, you have to prepare a fire from which you will be lighting the candles tomorrow for the Second Day of Shavuot and Shabbat. Although the laws of Festivals are more lenient than the laws of Shabbat, nevertheless it is forbidden on Yom Tov to create a flame by striking a match or using a lighter. One has to leave a pre-existing flame such as a yahrzeit candle lit before the first day of the Festival from which they can light a match and then use the ignited match to light the candles for the 2nd day of Shavuot and Shabbat. Lighting a match from existing fire is permitted because this way you don't create new fire, but rather transfer an existing fire to other places.

The commencement of the Yom Tov and lighting candles time; 9.04 pm

Two blessings are recited when lighting the Yom Tov candles;

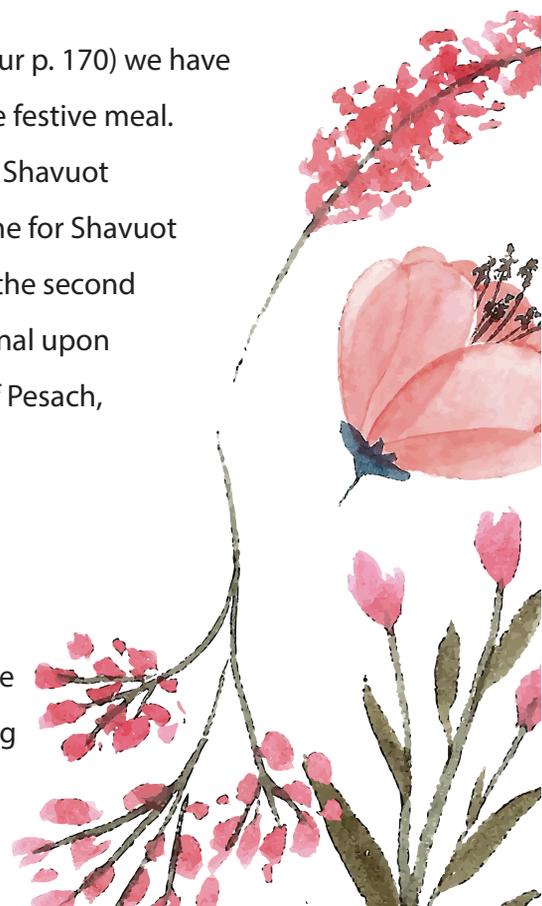
1. Baruch atah Adonai Eloheinu melech ha'olam, asher kid'shanu b'mitzvotav v'tzivanu lehadlik ner shel Yom Tov. - Blessed are you, L-rd our G-d, king of the universe, who has sanctified us with His commandments, and commanded us to light the lights of Yom Tov

2. Baruch atah Ado-nai, Elo-haynu melech Ha-olam, she'he'che'yanu v'kee'manu v'hee'gee'anu la'zman ha'zeh - Blessed are you L-rd our G-d, King of the universe, Who has kept us alive, sustained us, and brought us to this season.

After lighting the candles and reciting Mincha for weekdays (Rabbi Sacks' Siddur p. 170) we have an extended break before we can start Maariv and proceed to Kiddush and the festive meal.

The reason why we cannot start earlier is that, in contrast to all other Festivals, Shavuot doesn't have a set date in the Hebrew calendar; according to the Torah, the time for Shavuot comes after counting sheva shabatot temimot – seven complete weeks from the second day of Pesach. Because the Torah explicitly made the start of Shavuot conditional upon completing a period of seven complete weeks starting from the second day of Pesach, therefore, on Shavuot, unlike on Shabbat and other Festivals, we cannot recite Shavuot prayers or Kiddush before all the days and hours of the seven weeks have been completed; namely, not before the time of nightfall of the last-before Shavuot day. At this time of year, nightfall Leeds is at 10.12 pm.

To complicate things a little bit further, one is not allowed to eat or drink before Kiddush; the only option we are left with is to be patient and find an interesting topic of conversation or reading to shorten the time until 10.12. (You may remember Einstein's explanation of his theory of relativity!)



Why on Shavuot we start the Yom Tov so late: Q&A

Rabbi Kuperman

Q. I have been told that one cannot recite Maariv and make Kiddush on Shavuot night before 10.12 pm! Is that true?

A. Yes

Q. So by the time we finish saying the prayers and Kiddush we will sit down for the festive meal after 10.30 pm; how reasonable is that?

A. Not very much

Q. I thought that the Mitzvot of the Torah are supposed to be reasonable?

A. Depends whose reason you mean. Mitzvot of the Torah are God's commandments; as such they are dictated by God's reason which not always can be understood from human's reason perspective. How reasonable is it to fast 26 hours without even liquids on Yom Kippur?

Q. But this is very extreme! The Torah promotes a balanced life, doesn't it?

A. The Torah indeed promotes a balanced life; however, a balanced life allows some occasional eccentricity when there is a specific reason for it. When we go for a holiday we don't think twice if in order to catch the flight we have to be awake at 2.00 am (and enjoying a heavy in-flight meal at the same crazy time); it doesn't turn us into eccentrics.

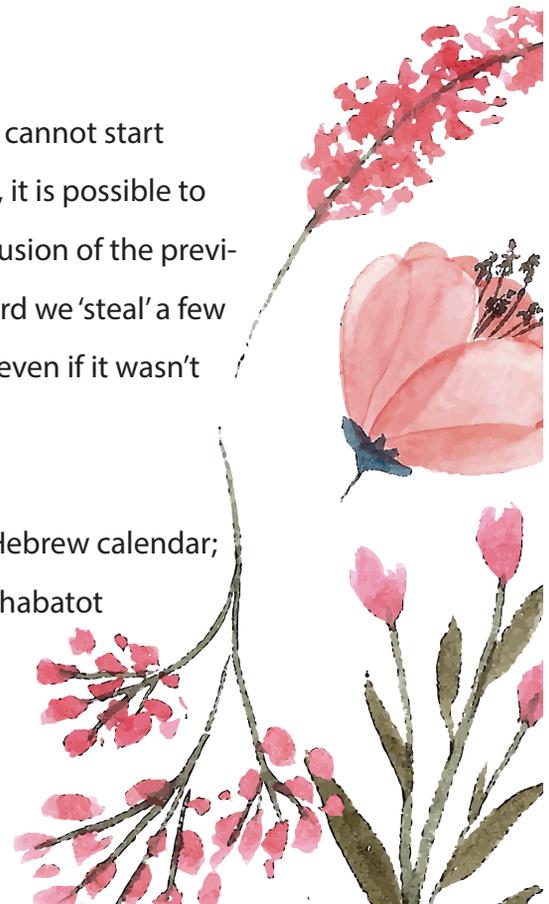
Q. Ok, ok; but after all, why is Shavuot different from every Shabbat and Festival that can be started early?

A. This is a very good question! The difference between Shavuot and every Shabbat and Festival hinges on four points:

1. According to the Torah, the precise point of division between two days, when the previous day finishes and the new day starts is the nightfall.

2. From the previous point, it apparently follows that Shabbat or a Festival cannot start before the conclusion of the previous day i.e. nightfall. However, in reality, it is possible to bring Shabbat or Festival forward, namely to start it even before the conclusion of the previous day. It doesn't matter that when, for instance, we bring Shabbat forward we 'steal' a few hours from Friday and turn them into Shabbat because Shabbat can start even if it wasn't preceded by six complete days of work.

3. In contrast to all other Festivals, Shavuot doesn't have a set date in the Hebrew calendar; according to the Torah, the time for Shavuot comes after counting sheva shabatot temimot – seven complete weeks from the second day of Pesach.



Q. Wow! Now I get it. But still supper at 10.30 pm...

A. You are absolutely right! Don't try to have a typical festive meal but rather have something light. Some people have the custom to have this meal made of dairy products rather than some heavy meat meal. And since you have already stayed up so late, why not use this fabulous opportunity to perform the custom of Tikun Leil Shavuot - staying up all night of Shavuot learning Torah? Tikun means amendment; a number of sources say that the Israelites displayed their lack of enthusiasm for receiving the Torah at Mount Sinai by falling asleep the night before. By showing our zeal for Torah study on this very night we mend the failure of our ancestors. For this very purpose, we provided you with this stimulating learning pack which has in it enough material to keep you engaged in learning for hours!

All-night sounds like a tough challenge, but the morning breaks very early; you can learn till about 4.15 am and then recite the Shavuot prayers and go to sleep until lunch. If you find learning until the morning too challenging, try to stay learning for as long as you can.

Halachic guidance

At 10.12pm - Maariv for Festivals (Rabbi Sacks' Siddur pp. 274- 282 & 646-660) following with Kiddush for Festival Evenings (Rabbi Sacks' Siddur p. 660) (if you recited the She'he'che'yanu blessing while lighting the candles don't say it again during the Kiddush, or if you hear the Kiddush from another person don't answer Amen after this blessing.)

Considering the time you are going to make Hamotzi it is probably not the best idea to have a traditional festive meal; try to have something elegant and light. Some people have the custom to have this meal made of dairy products.



A thoughtful piece to accompany your Shavuot meal - by Alby Chait

Allow me to share with you one of the most heart warming and humbling works of Jewish thought that I ever came across.

Contemporary author Rabbi Zelig Pliskin summed up in a single paragraph the formula, the recipe for a world of continued peace, respect – perhaps most importantly love and kindness.

Love for each and every human being despite the G-d we pray to, despite the race or ethnicity into which we were born.

“Right this moment, (he says) there are a multitude of people all around our planet involved in serving us. Many of them we will never meet in person, but we will benefit greatly from their activities.

There are farmeres who are planting and harvesting for us.

There are people in the clothing industry who are weaving the cloth and designing the garments we will all eventually wear.

There are trucks, boats and planes that are shipping all around the world the food we will eat, the clothes we will wear - countless other items that we will buy or use.

There are people who are involved in making certain that we have water, electricity, phone coverage, internet and books.

The postal authorities who are busy at work delivering the letters we sent, the cards we wrote and are bringing to us all the mail that others have sent us.

There are inventors who are working day and night on items that will one day be ours.

To some – silly ideas – but in the future – perhaps a breakthrough actually changing the way in which we live our lives.

There are Engineers, mechanics and a wide variety of labourers all around the globe toiling for our benefit.

Medical researchers working especially at this critical time, to find cures; not just for COVID-19, but for all illnesses that please G-d, one day will save our lives. G-d forbid a condition or disease that 10 years ago may have sadly been fatal.

Whenever we see another person, it is a reminder to be grateful to all those who are involved in one way or another in enhancing the quality of our lives and the world in which we live.”

My friends, each one of us has G-d given abilities, skills, responsibilities to give beauty to the world.

To sustain human kind in a way we may deem small or insignificant but in fact crucial in our collective “team” of living civilised human beings.

The purpose of life – is to enjoy life, to contribute to life and maintain life.

By holding our existence sacred in a true Jewish way – tight in the hand with Almighty G-d, walking on the road of righteousness - we turn a world we all too often see that contains evil transformed into one draped in peace, respect – most importantly love and kindness.



As we enter the festival of Shavuot, what is in mind?

This the festival we celebrate G-d giving us the Torah from Mount Sinai.

The Torah - the holiest physical artefact we have in Judaism – dictated by G-d, inscribed by Moses – kissed when we are near to it – bowed from when we are afar.

And I think the lesson of Shavuot is simple.

To realise how significant each and every one of us is.

No matter ability, wealth, standing, no matter race or faith.

I see Shavuot as G-d's giving to us the lease of this world.

To follow in a path that is all embracing – that integrates into other communities and builds bridges not barriers.

I see a festival that realigns our commitment to each other as much as it does to Almighty G-d.

Look inside the 10 commandments.

On the one side, Bein Adam Lamakom – commandments between us and the Almighty.

On the other, Bein Adam Lechavero – commandments between us and our fellow.

A festival that realigns our commitment to each other as much as it does to Almighty G-d.

To realise how significant each and every one of us is.

No matter ability, wealth, standing, no matter race or faith.

Let us follow in accord to our tradition – to continue to be a source of strength to others and a light unto the world.

I wish each and every one of you Chag Shavuot Sameach

Halachic Guidance

While reciting the Grace After Meal – Birkat Hamazon, don't forget to include the special insertion for the Festivals - Ya'aleh Ve'Yavo, making appropriate reference to the Festival of Shavuot.

And since you have already stayed so late, why not to use this fabulous opportunity to perform the custom of Tikun Leil Shavuot - staying up all night of Shavuot learning Torah? Tikun means amendment; a number of sources say that the Israelites displayed their lack of enthusiasm for receiving the Torah at Mount Sinai by falling asleep the night before. By showing our zeal for Torah study on this very night we mend the failure of our ancestors.

The learning pack prepared by the Leeds Kollel has enough material to keep you engaged in learning for hours! You can study any Torah subject during the Tikun.

An all-night study sounds like a tough challenge, but the morning breaks very early; you can learn until about 4.15 am, recite the Shavuot prayers (as explained below), and then have a short Kiddush (Rabbi Sacks' Siddur p 730) and a well-deserved sleep until lunch. If you find learning until the morning too challenging, try to stay learning for as long as you can.



Introduction: Tikkun Leil Shavuot – It all comes down to the style...

Rabbi Aaron Stroh (Leeds Kollel)

Shavuot always falls in the week after we read the Torah portion of Bamidbar. Much is written concerning the connection between the two, and I would like to share with you just two thoughts that we can take from here. Firstly, the Torah is teaching us that everybody is counted in the census of the Jewish people. This shows us that every person is important and worthy. When it comes to receiving the Torah, no-one should feel that they are unworthy of being connected to the Torah. We are all counted to teach us that we have that greatness within us.

Secondly, the portion of Bamidbar describes at great length the layout of the Jewish camp. Each of the tribes was allocated their specific position in the camp which they had to adhere to. This, explains the Kli Yakar, was because each tribe had a specific attribute that they contributed to the camp of Israel. Only once all the different sections of the Jewish people contributed their own unique characteristic traits, was the divine presence able to rest in their midst.

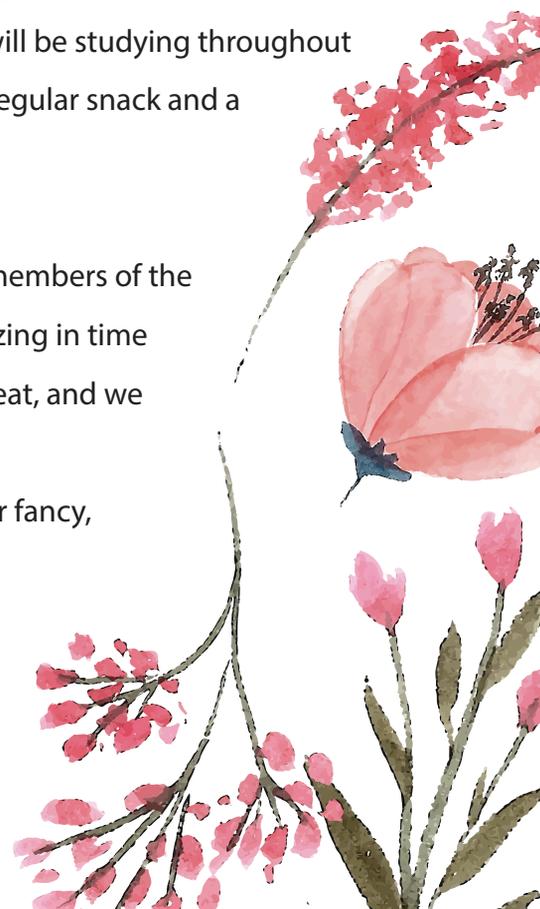
When it came to receiving the Torah, it was the same. The Jews were allocated specific positions around Har Sinai according to their different strengths. Only through the accumulation of each person's unique abilities, could they then receive the Torah. Therefore it was important for each and every Jew to stand in THEIR place, to realise that they were unique. Each person was needed to add their special colour to the picture.

When it comes to reading articles, every reader has a different taste. Writers are no different, with each writer offering a different flavour. When we launched this project, we asked many different people to contribute articles on a broad range of topics. We hope this will provide plenty reading material for everyone.

If you read these articles through the course of the night, you will be joining with many others within the community who will also be studying them. If staying awake the whole night isn't for you, then you will enjoy going through this booklet during the two day period of Yom Tov. If you will be studying throughout the night then make sure to keep yourself fully fuelled and awake with a regular snack and a little fresh air every now and then!

We would like to take this opportunity to thank all of the Rabbonim and members of the community who agreed to contribute their articles to this booklet. Squeezing in time during extra hectic schedules to write up these terrific articles is no easy feat, and we very much appreciate all that they have done towards this booklet.

So, without further ado, immerse yourself in the first topic that tickles your fancy, and read the night away!



SIX QUESTIONS FOR SHAVUOS - Rabbi Jason Kleiman

There is a famous question as to why one of the names of Shavuos is "Zman Mattan Torateinu" - "The Time of the Giving of The Torah" and not "The Time of the Receiving of The Torah." The famous answer of the Kotzker Rebbe is that the giving of the Torah took place on one day only, but the receiving of Torah takes place every day.

Shavuos is the time to take stock of our daily relationship with Torah which began when our ancestors stood at Har Sinai coming up to 3332 years ago and bequeathed to us the responsibility to study, practice and uphold it. When the time comes for us to leave this world, our relationship to Torah study will be scrutinised by the Almighty.

The Gemara teaches in two places (Kiddushin 40b, Sanhedrin 7a), based on a verse in Mishlei, that a person will first be asked to account to the Heavenly tribunal in regard to Torah study. Yet, the Gemara in Shabbos (31), lists six questions, based on a Posuk in Yeshaya (33:6), that a person will be asked by the Heavenly court when "brought to judgment," and the Gemara records the first question as "Did you do business or conduct yourself in a faithful and honest manner?" Only in the second question is the enquiry concerning Torah study, "Did you set aside time to devote to the study of Torah?" The Tosafos in both Sanhedrin and Kiddushin (7a and 40b) provides resolutions for this apparent contradiction. For example, the first question that will be asked is indeed about business conduct, but the first judgment to be handed down, will be in regard to one's involvement in Torah study.

By looking at all six questions that will be asked of a person, and on the basis of Rashi's interpretation of the passage in Kiddushin and Sanhedrin, as well as on a cryptic observation of the Vilna Gaon on the Gemara in Shabbos, it is possible to suggest a somewhat broader solution of this problem. While the specific focus of the first question is about business conduct, all of the six questions in this unit can be shown to be concerned with Torah study. Together, therefore, they ask the larger question of whether a person has integrated Torah study into all aspects of life. These six opening questions, taken as a unit, would clearly justify the aphorism that when we are brought to judgment, we will be asked first about our involvement in Torah study.

Rashi interprets this passage in both places using a form of the "involvement in Torah." This phrase connotes not only the actual study of Torah but also the application of Torah decisions and values throughout our lives. Thus, for example, when we make the Beracha "L'Asok B'Divrei Torah", before davening each morning, we do not have to make it again for other Torah study during the day, even if we do not proceed immediately to study Torah after davening.



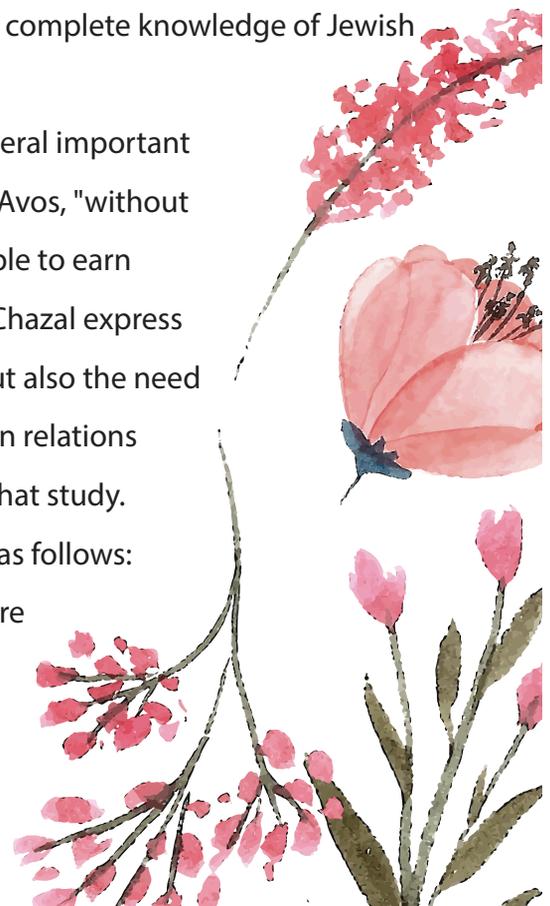
Rashi interprets this passage in both places using a form of the "involvement in Torah." This phrase connotes¹⁴ not only the actual study of Torah but also the application of Torah decisions and values throughout our lives. Thus, for example, when we make the Beracha "L'Asok B'Divrei Torah", before davening each morning, we do not have to make it again for other Torah study during the day, even if we do not proceed immediately to study Torah after davening. This may be due to the fact that all our activities, throughout davening and following it, including eating, going to work and the like, are also governed by Torah law and its applications. Hence, these activities are covered under the rubric of "L'Asok B'Divrei Torah". The Vilna Gaon notes that the verse in Yeshaya, "The stability of your times, the strength of your salvation, shall be through knowledge and wisdom," cited by Rava as the source of the six questions that a person will be asked, had been interpreted by Reish Lakish as referring to the six orders of the Mishnah. The Gaon suggests that each of the questions is itself a kind of code for asking whether the person studied the six orders of the Mishnah. The Gaon's explanation concludes by noting that all of the questions, therefore, concern only Divrei Torah.

Let us look at the questions themselves and highlight some of the more overt connections between them and Torah study. The first question, "Nasata V'Nata B'Emunah?" - "Have your dealings been in good faith?" has several possible connections. Some interpret this question as referring not to business dealings but as a question about faith and belief - did you contemplate and consider matters of Emunah? According to this interpretation, the first question has much to do with Torah study. A proper understanding of the principles of our faith, through

the study of Jewish thought or philosophy, should be undertaken by anyone who is involved in serious Torah study. Indeed, the Rambam begins his major work of Jewish law, the Mishneh Torah, with the laws of the basic principles of the Torah and other areas of Jewish thought such as the laws of knowledge and, laws of repentance, which suggests that an understanding of these themes is critical to a complete knowledge of Jewish law.

Even if the first question is about one's business dealings, there are still several important connections to Torah study. We are all familiar with the statement in Pirkei Avos, "without flour there is no Torah" (3:21). Since the normal way of the world is for people to earn a livelihood as Rabbi Meir says, cited in the Mishnah (Kiddushin Perek 2), Chazal express on numerous occasions, not only the importance of one's own learning, but also the need to support Torah study for others. Indeed, as the famous Yissachar - Zevulun relations teaches us, one who uses their wealth to support the Torah has a share in that study.

The Vilna Gaon interprets the Posuk in Parshas Chukkas (Bamidbar 21:18), as follows: the fountain of Torah is carved out (and acquired) by Torah scholars (who are often referred to as 'sarim', officers). It is also acquired to the same extent by philanthropists (Nidivai HaAam).



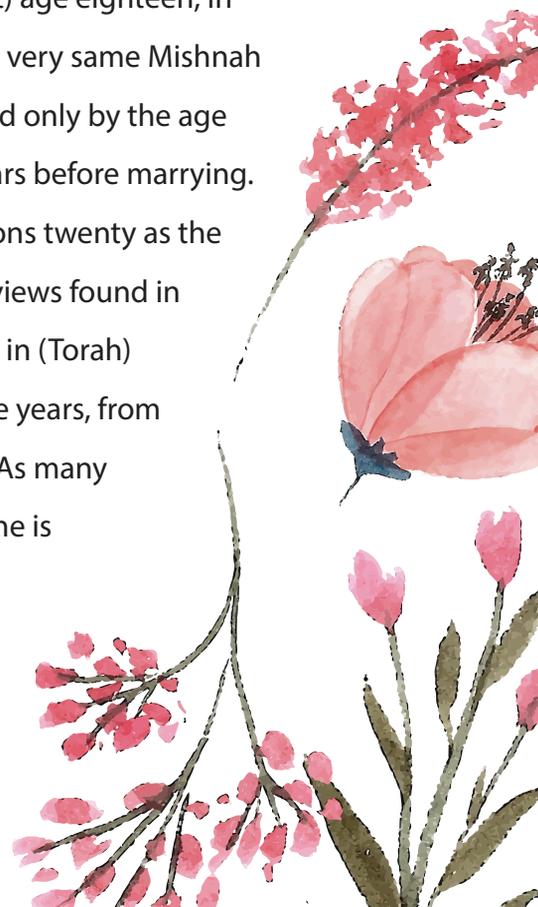
The scholars acquire it through their learning (michokak) and those who donate funds acquire it throughout their support and generosity (b'mishanotom). So how a person uses the asset that he or she earns has much to do with the study of Torah.

There is, however, an even deeper connection between doing business honestly and Torah study. Ramban cites a Mechilta on the Posuk found in Parshas Beshalach following Az Yashir, "V'HaYashar B'Einav Taaseh" [the full verse reads: if the members of Klal Yisrael heed the voice of Hashem and do what is proper in His eyes and follow and observe all the mitzvos, they will never be subjected to the plagues visited upon the Egyptians (Shemot 15:62)]. This means, if one does business honestly, and thereby fulfills all of the sometimes intricate Halachic regulations and requirements of proper Jewish business, that person is considered to have fulfilled all the precepts of the Torah. The knowledge and commitment required to do this is so significant, that one who succeeds, is compared to someone who has kept (and presumably studied) the entire Torah. It appears, from several different perspectives, that the connection between the first question and Torah knowledge and study is a substantive one.

The second question, "Have you set aside time for Torah?" is obviously linked to Torah study, as we have seen. We will return to discuss this question, however, when we reach the last two questions which also ask about actual Torah study: Pilpalta b'chochma, hevanta davar toch davar. We will explain at that point what the difference is between these questions and why all of them are asked. The third question is: Did you marry and raise a family? The connection between this question and the study of Torah can be seen from a comment of the Beis Shemuel on Even HaEzer (Siman 1). Based on the Mishnah at the end of the fifth Perek of Pirkei Avos, the Shulchan Aruch writes that one should marry at the age of eighteen.

The Beis Shemuel comments that even though all Mitzvos are incumbent upon a Jewish male at age thirteen, Chazal accepted the idea that marriage should be postponed until (at least) age eighteen, in order to give a person a chance to delve into serious Torah study. Since the very same Mishnah in Pirkei Avos teaches that truly intensive Gemara study begins to take hold only by the age of fifteen, a person was instructed to study intensively for at least three years before marrying.

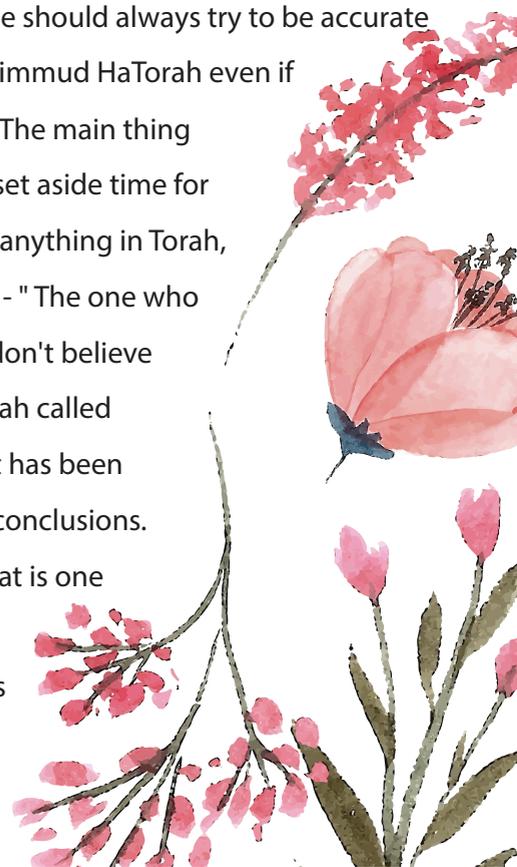
[Indeed, a second Rabbinic view is found in Kiddushin (29b), which mentions twenty as the age of marriage. These two ages, eighteen and twenty, correspond to the views found in Chulin (24a), concerning how long it takes to achieve a measure of success in (Torah) study-three years (15-18) or five years (15-20) (just as it took the Levi'im five years, from twenty five to thirty, to master their service in the Mishkan and Mikdash).] As many Poskim point out, the age of marriage may be postponed even further if one is still studying Torah and preparing for his future. Once marriage occurs, it is necessary to be able to teach and instruct one's family in addition to earning a livelihood. Thus, the time of marriage is closely related to one's achievements and grounding in Torah study.



On the fourth question, "Did you hope and trust in Hashem's salvation and redemption?" Rashi comments: "I'divrei haNevi'im". Genuine Jewish beliefs relating to future judgement and the final destiny of the soul/human-kind are based on the words of our Prophets. Careful study of the books of the Nevi'im is a necessary prerequisite for formulating and understanding what the salvation is about. While it may not be possible to fathom completely all of the aspects of the end of days, we need to consult Sifrei HaNevi'im in order to establish the parameters of that era. As Rambam notes (Hilchot Melachim 12:2) we need to identify the proper direction of the Biblical verses, in order to say anything about the Messianic age and beyond. This certainly requires study in addition to belief. So this question as well is inextricably linked to the study of Torah.

The final two questions, "Have you used your intellect wisely?" and "Were you able to understand one thing from another?" obviously refer to dimensions of Torah study. Rambam writes (Hilchot Talmud Torah 1:12) that individuals have achieved a high level of Gemara study when they can understand fully the way that a Torah concept or law can be developed or applied from its original source; when they can derive one law or concept from another and when they can properly compare (and contrast) one law to another. The terms which Rambam employs are quite reminiscent of these last two questions which refer explicitly to Torah study.

Many Acharonim, including Rav Yosef Dov Soloveitchick, posit that the Mitzvah of Torah study has different kiyumim, different levels through which it may be fulfilled. To take the model developed by Rav Yisrael Salanter, recorded by his student Rav Yitzchak Blazer in Or Yisrael, (chapter 27), there are two distinct aspects of the Mitzvah of Talmud Torah: Limmud Torah (learning Torah) and Yediat Torah (knowing Torah). The aspect of Limmud Torah is derived from the verse in Sefer Yehoshua, "V'hagita yomam v'leilah" meaning, there is an obligation to spend as much time as possible engaged in the study of Torah. Although one should always try to be accurate and to remember what one learns, one is mikayaim (fulfills) the Mitzvah of Limmud HaTorah even if one is not able to recount later clearly and correctly what has been learned. The main thing is to put in the time honestly. This is the second question of the six, did you set aside time for Torah study. Without quality time being invested, it is impossible to achieve anything in Torah, as the Gemara tells us in Megillah 6a "HaOmer lo yagati u'matzati al taamin" - "The one who says I didn't search/haven't worked hard but I found/have been successful, don't believe them." Yet, there is an additional, higher aspect of the Mitzvah of Talmud Torah called Yediat HaTorah. This means that one knows and has mastered the Torah that has been studied, and can recite and apply that knowledge to reach proper Halachic conclusions. It is based on Chazal's comment (cited by Rashi) on the phrase in Shema, that is one who has achieved the proper understanding and the correct application of YediatHaTorah is able to respond crisply and without hesitation to questions of interpretation and Halacha.



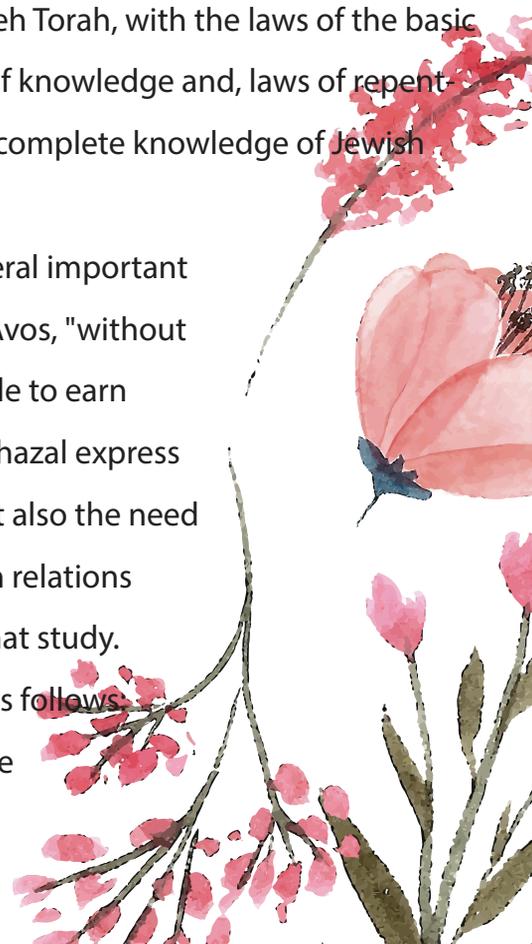
Rashi interprets this passage in both places using a form of the "involvement in Torah." This phrase connotes not only the actual study of Torah but also the application of Torah decisions and values throughout our lives. Thus, for example, when we make the Beracha "L'Asok B'Divrei Torah", before davening each morning, we do not have to make it again for other Torah study during the day, even if we do not proceed immediately to study Torah after davening. This may be due to the fact that all our activities, throughout davening and following it, including eating, going to work and the like, are also governed by Torah law and its applications. Hence, these activities are covered under the rubric of "L'Asok B'Divrei Torah". The Vilna Gaon notes that the verse in Yeshaya, "The stability of your times, the strength of your salvation, shall be through knowledge and wisdom," cited by Rava as the source of the six questions that a person will be asked, had been interpreted by Reish Lakish as referring to the six orders of the Mishnah. The Gaon suggests that each of the questions is itself a kind of code for asking whether the person studied the six orders of the Mishnah. The Gaon's explanation concludes by noting that all of the questions, therefore, concern only Divrei Torah.

Let us look at the questions themselves and highlight some of the more overt connections between them and Torah study. The first question, "Nasata V'Nata B'Emunah?" - "Have your dealings been in good faith?" has several possible connections. Some interpret this question as referring not to business dealings but as a question about faith and belief - did you contemplate and consider matters of Emunah? According to this interpretation, the first question has much to do with Torah study. A proper understanding of the principles of our faith, through

the study of Jewish thought or philosophy, should be undertaken by anyone who is involved in serious Torah study. Indeed, the Rambam begins his major work of Jewish law, the Mishneh Torah, with the laws of the basic principles of the Torah and other areas of Jewish thought such as the laws of knowledge and, laws of repentance, which suggests that an understanding of these themes is critical to a complete knowledge of Jewish law.

Even if the first question is about one's business dealings, there are still several important connections to Torah study. We are all familiar with the statement in Pirkei Avos, "without flour there is no Torah" (3:21). Since the normal way of the world is for people to earn a livelihood as Rabbi Meir says, cited in the Mishnah (Kiddushin Perek 2), Chazal express on numerous occasions, not only the importance of one's own learning, but also the need to support Torah study for others. Indeed, as the famous Yissachar - Zevulun relations teaches us, one who uses their wealth to support the Torah has a share in that study.

The Vilna Gaon interprets the Posuk in Parshas Chukkas (Bamidbar 21:18), as follows: the fountain of Torah is carved out (and acquired) by Torah scholars (who are often referred to as 'sarim', officers). It is also acquired to the same extent by philanthropists (Nidivai HaAam).



The stage of Yediat HaTorah is represented by questions five and six, "falalta b'chochma" and "hevanta¹⁸ davar mitoch davar" - Were you fully successful with the time that you invested in Torah study? Were you able to achieve all that you were capable of achieving?

So, to sum up, the answer to the contradiction raised at the beginning of our discussion may be very simple. Not only the first question, "nasata v'natata b'emunah", but all of the questions that a person will be asked, seek to ascertain the extent to which a person inculcated Torah study and the application of its laws and values into his or her life. We ask four (main) questions at the Seder on Pesach. It is fitting on Shavuos, Z'man Mattan Torateinu, "the time of the giving of The Torah," to reflect upon the six questions which are posed by the Gemara in Maseches Shabbos.

Chag Sameach to everyone and may our commitment to Torah merit to bring us the final redemption, speedily in our days.



Rabbi Ahron Kramer

This article deals with a number of interrelated points regarding Shavuos and each is a stand-alone topic. You can read the entire article or only those points that interest you.

A

TWO DAYS YOM TOV IN THE DIASPORA

B

WAS THE TORAH GIVEN ON DAY 50 OR PERHAPS ON DAY 51?

C

UNDERSTANDING THE DISPUTE IF THE TORAH

WAS GIVEN ON THE 6TH or 7th of SIVAN

There are several pieces of information which lead us to the questions we will pose:

1. It states in the Torah (Leviticus 23: 15-21) that we count the Omer for 49 days, starting on the 2nd day of Pesach,, and on day 50 will be the festival of Shavuos (which is a one day festival by Biblical law).
2. In the Gemara (Tractate Shabbos 86b) we find a consensus that the Torah was given on a Shabbos, although there is a dispute if that Shabbos was the 6th or the 7th of Sivan.
3. There is a well known Midrash that tells us that the Jews left Egypt on a Thursday.

QUESTIONS

A. Why do we celebrate the Festivals for two days in the Diaspora?

B. In the year the Jews left Egypt, how can we say that Shavuos was the 50th day, starting the count from the second day of Pesach, if they went out on a Thursday (3 above), and the Torah was given on a Shabbos (2 above)?

(Friday would have been "day 1" to their counting, meaning "day 50" would have been 49 days later on Friday, making Shabbos "day 51"!)

C. How can there be a dispute if the Torah was given on the 6th or the 7th of Sivan (2 above) if everyone agrees it was on Shabbos (2 above), exactly 7 weeks + 2 days after they left Egypt?! The calendardate of that Shabbos should be clear!)?



TWO DAYS YOM TOV IN THE DIASPORA

Every Tom Tov is set in the Torah as one day. Pesach & Sukkot would each have one day at the beginning and one day at the end and Shavuot and Rosh Hashana would have one day each. (This article will not discuss Rosh Hashana, as it has its own reasoning for keeping two days which applies worldwide, including Israel. We are discussing the Yomim Tovim that we celebrate two days in the Diaspora, while only one day in Israel).

THE HISTORIC BACKGROUND TO WHY A DAY WAS ADDED IN THE DIASPORA

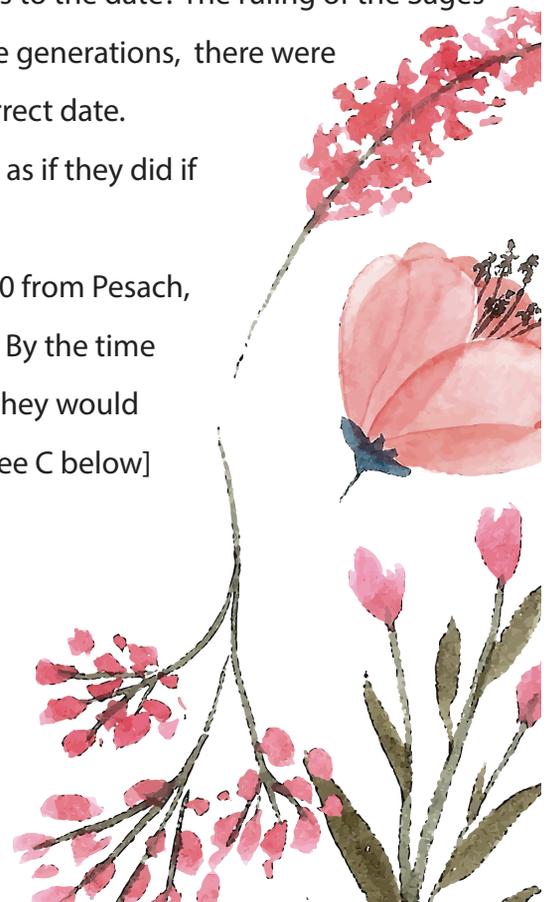
The Jewish calendar is based on the lunar cycle, where a new month begins with the new moon. In the times of the Temple, the process for establishing the new month was by way of witnesses coming to the Beth Din in Jerusalem testifying that they had sighted the new moon. If their testimony was accepted, the Beth Din would establish the new month. They would then spread the word that the new month had begun. In those days, prior to phones, email, or even telegrams, they would send out messengers. These messengers would reach all places in Israel within several days, so by the time Yom Tov came around, which for Pesach & Sukkos is the 15th of their respective months, and for Shavuot the 6th of its month, everyone knew the accurate date. However they would not reach many areas in the Diaspora, where ever since the destruction of the first Temple many Jews resided. These Jews would not know if it was that day or the next day. They would therefore keep two days Yom Tov because of this doubt. Subsequently, when the Beth Din in Jerusalem was no longer functioning, a new system took over. The great scholar Hillel put together a calendar to carry us through, and his calendar is used until today (the calculations included in his calendar are amazing and mind boggling, but that is not our subject here). With this new calendar taking over, the question was then posed: Do the Jews in the Diaspora still need to keep two days Yom Tov, as they no longer have any doubts as to the date? The ruling of the Sages was a clear YES. They felt that with the dispersion of the Jews through the generations, there were justifiable concerns that doubts would occasionally creep in as to the correct date.

They therefore ruled to continue the Minhag of observing two days, just as if they did if they had a doubt.

[There is an additional issue concerning Shavuot. Since Shavuot is day 50 from Pesach, then it is not connected to a date in Sivan, but rather to a date in Nissan. By the time Shavuot came around, there was no longer any doubt as to Nissan, and they would not have celebrated two days. For a discussion regarding this question see C below]

IS THE CONCERN JUSTIFIED?

Nowadays, some may question the justification of the Sages concern. In addition, even if it was justified yesteryear, does it still stand relevant today?



*Even today in 2020 there are places in the world in where the Halachic date is unclear. The International Date Line, which is the Line of Demarcation (the line that separates between two days) was established as recently as 1884! It is an arbitrary point, obviously having no effect on the Halachic status of that day. As an example, in the Far East and in Australia there are areas that do not have Halachic clarity as to the actual date (and if one goes to those areas over the weekend, he/she may be required to observe two days of Shabbos!)*There are documented reports from WW11 of people in concentration camps who created their own calendars, and subsequently they found out that they were sadly off by one day!

*Throughout the generations, many and perhaps most Jews lived amongst Christians who used the Julian and Gregorian calendars. These calendars are solar-based, each with their own challenges, as the solar year is 365.242 days, resulting in adjustments being required from time to time. In the year 1582, the 5th of October never happened!

In 1752, eleven days were omitted, with the 3rd of September became the 11th of September! We can well imagine that this caused not a little of confusion as to what the Jewish date was. Imagine what turmoil we would be in today if that were to happen!

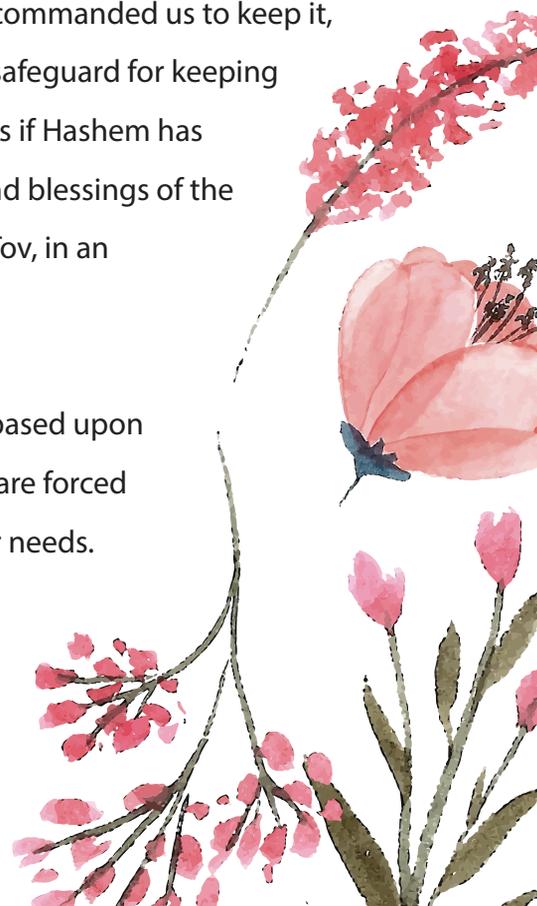
*For the Jews living in the Muslim countries, who use a lunar calendar, there are discrepancies in how Jews establish the start of the month and how the Muslims establish it and they can differ in a day or two. This certainly would be a cause of confusion in establishing Jewish dates.

In conclusion, just from this very superficial glance alone, there is sufficient reason for us to appreciate the foresight our sages had.

We must also be aware of the fact that Hashem, who gave us the Torah and commanded us to keep it, also commanded the Sages to institute whatever they feel is necessary as a safeguard for keeping the Torah, and commanded us to abide by this. It follows from this that it is as if Hashem has commanded us to keep the second day of Yom Tov. Indeed, in the prayers and blessings of the second day we mention that Hashem has commanded us to keep the Yom Tov, in an identical manner as we say it on the first day!

One final note: As in many areas in life, a huge amount of our reactions are based upon our attitude. If we look at Yom Tov as a day of restrictions and a day that we are forced to put our lives on hold, we may feel that the Sages were not sensitive to our needs.

On the other hand, we have the ability to change our outlook, and see Yom Tov as it literally translates "A Good Day", a day off from the never ending race and a day to connect more with our loved ones and with our community. It is a gift the Sages gave us!



WAS THE TORAH REALLY GIVEN ON DAY 50?

In the year the Jews left Egypt, how can we say that Shavuot (the day of the giving of the Torah) was the 50th day, starting the count from the second day of Pesach, if they went out on a Thursday (3 above), and the Torah was given on a Shabbos (2 above)? (Friday would have been day 1 to their counting, meaning "day 50" would have been 49 days later on Friday, making Shabbos "day 51"!).

There are many answers given to this question. We will mention three of them.

1) Both of the above points, that they left Egypt on a Thursday, and that the Torah was given on a Shabbos, are not mentioned openly in the Torah. They are traditions, and we find that conflicting traditions exist. In this instance, we need not lose any sleep over it, determining the more accurate tradition, because there are no ramifications to this dispute.

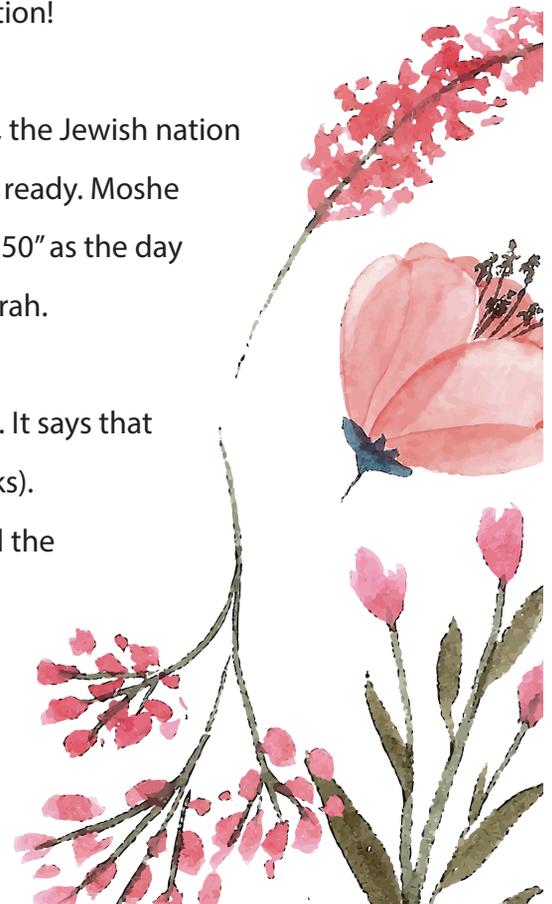
However, many conflicts in the Gemara have real Halachic ramifications. A high percentage of the Gemara is actual debates focused on proving which tradition is the accurate one.

At first glance, it may seem strange for there to be conflicts. However, upon realising how the transmission of the Torah was for the first thousand years, it is amazing there are so few arguments! From the time the Torah was given, nothing other than what is written in the Torah was transcribed. The entire Oral Torah, which is what is recorded in the Gemara, was all transmitted orally. The Sages knew it all by heart and passed it on from generation to generation. Eventually, when too many differing opinions occurred, the Sages deemed it necessary to record the Oral Torah.

We should take immense pride in the fact that we have such a unique tradition!

2) Hashem was willing to give us the Torah on Friday/day 50. However, the Jewish nation had spent the 49 days preparing themselves for it, and they did not yet feel ready. Moshe requested from Hashem to wait one more day. Therefore, we consider "day 50" as the day of the Giving of the Torah, and "day 51" as the day of the Receiving of the Torah.

3) Nowhere does it say in the Torah that the Torah was given on day 50. It says that they should count 49 days, and day 50 will be the Festival of Shavuot (Weeks). We can therefore perhaps suggest that Shavuot was on Friday/"day 50", and the Torah was given on the next day Shabbos/"day 51".



UNDERSTANDING THE DISPUTE IF THE GIVING OF THE TORAH WAS ON THE 6TH or 7th of SIVAN

How can there be a dispute if the Torah was given on the 6th or the 7th of Sivan (2 above) If everyone agrees it was on Shabbos (2 above), exactly 7 weeks + 2 days after they left Egypt?! The calendar date of that Shabbos should be clear!)

In section A it we discussed that nowadays we have a fixed calendar, which was put together by Hillel. Prior to that, the start of the months were established by the Beth Din in Jerusalem upon testimony of witnesses who had seen the new moon.

To gain a bit of an understanding of the complexity involved in this, we need to scratch the surface of some of the challenges Hillel had in creating a lunar calendar:

The time span of a lunar month is 29.53 days. Twelve months add up to 354.36 days. The problem is that dates work with whole days, so we cannot simply start a new month every 29.53 days or a new year every 354.36 days. Therefore, Hillel had to alternate months, with one month being 29 days and the next being 30 days and so on. However, this would also be slightly inaccurate since 12 months would reach 354 days, with a remainder of .36 days, missing out one day once every 3 years. To avoid this problem, ten months were fixed as alternating pattern of 29 and 30 days, while two months, Cheshvan & Kislev were not fixed the same every year. Some years they alternate with one having 29 days and the other 30 days, some years they both have 29 days and some years they both have 30 days.

Therefore, in our fixed "Hillel Calendar" the month of Nissan always has 30 days, and the month of Iyar always has 29 days. If we calculate counting 50 days starting from the 2nd day of Pesach (16th Nissan) we will land on 6 Sivan (16th-30th Nissan=15 days, + 29 days in Iyar=44, + 6 days in Sivan=50).

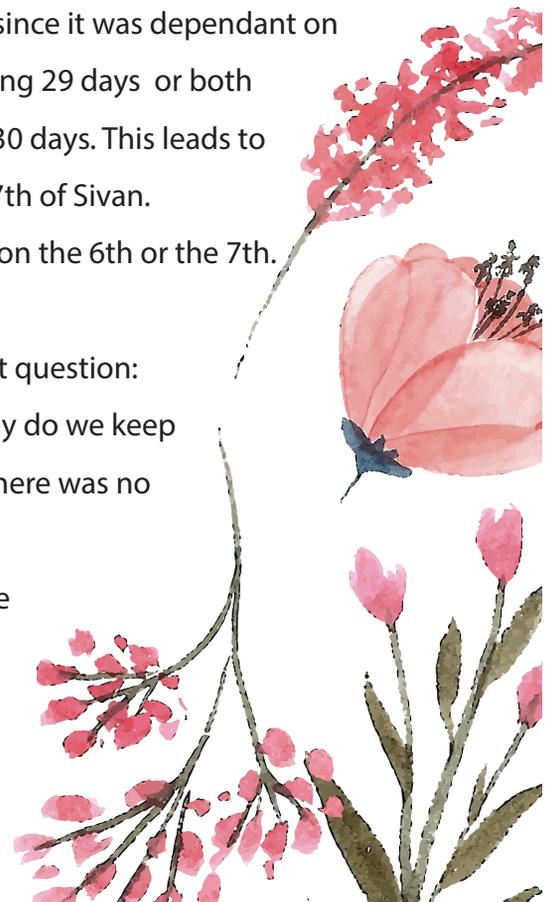
However, in pre-Hillel times the months were not fixed in this rigid mould, since it was dependant on the arrival of witnesses. We could theoretically have Nissan & Iyar both having 29 days or both having 30 days or having them alternating one with 29 days and one with 30 days. This leads to 3 possible dates for Shavuot which is "day 50"; it could land on 5th, 6th, or 7th of Sivan.

So we now understand how there can be a dispute if the first Shavuot was on the 6th or the 7th.

This information can help us answer a different question:

Since Shavuot is "day 50" counting from Pesach, and not a date in Sivan, why do we keep two days of Shavuot outside of Israel? By the time Shavuot came around, there was no longer any doubt in the Diaspora as to when Pesach was?

We can answer that we rule like the opinion that the Torah was given on the 6th of Sivan (because according to that opinion in that year "day 50" was the 6th of Sivan), and from then on, in subsequent years, we celebrate the 6th of Sivan, for which there would have been a doubt in the Diaspora when the 6th is.



Please Remain Seated

Rabbi Chaim Cohen

'Rabbi of Yavneh Girls and Associate Rabbi of Stenecourt, formerly JLE UK North fieldworker'

Yankel was new to town. He arrived shortly before Shavuot and wanted to fit in. Before going to shul on Yom Tov he tried doing his homework, learning where to sit and where not to sit, not to come too early or too late. Yankel was enjoying the davening. The chazzan was melodious but not too schlepped. Then it came time for leining.

Yankel looked around him not knowing what to do when it came to the aseres hadibros. Should he stand or should he sit? He doesn't want to be the odd one out. As he is wondering what to do, he notices a commotion on the bimah. The president was motioning for people to stand and the gabbai was signalling everyone to sit. Before he knew it, everyone is getting involved and it was turning into quite the argument!

Turning to the man next to him, Yankel asks, 'what is the custom here? Do you stand or sit for the reading of the aseres hadibros?' His neighbour replies tartly, 'our custom is to debate it each time!'

But how did such a debate really come about? Why do people really have such different views on this? Does it really matter? Please *take a seat* and let's learn through this topic together.

Rambam was asked (Teshuvos Harambam 46) whether it is right to stand for the reading of the *aseres hadibros* (Decalogue). Many have the custom to do so to remind us of the time we stood when we received the Torah.

The Gemara (Berachos 12a) tells us that the *chachamim* (sages) did not incorporate the *aseres hadibros* into the *davening* as there was a danger that some would think like the heretics that this was the only passage given at Sinai. Unfortunately, it is not uncommon to come across people who believe, erroneously, that there are only ten commandments in the Torah, or that these commandments are more important than the other 603.

So as not to encourage this mistaken belief, Rambam writes that one who normally sits during *leining* must not stand for the *aseres hadibros*.

Responsa of Rambam 46

Question: Regarding people standing during the reading of the *aseres hadibros*, there is one sage who said people should stand while another prevented people from standing. He demonstrated his opinion by saying that since *chazal* (sages) abolished the recital of the *aseres hadibros* along with the *shema* because there were heretics that claimed that the *aseres hadibros* are more important than the rest of the Torah. This Rabbi said that one who stands should be admonished because this is an act of the heretics who believe that the *aseres hadibros* are more important than the rest of the Torah because these heretics believe in everything except for the words of *chazal*. Thus, it is appropriate to publicise over disagreement on this matter.

Response: That which the sage said to sit during the *aseres hadibros* is correct, and all of his proofs are logical truths with nothing to add. It is appropriate to admonish people in places where they stand as it results in a lack of belief, as it will lead people to believe that there are parts of the Torah that are more important than other parts..

תשובות הרמב"ם מו

שאלה על עמידת בני אדם בעת קריאת עשר הדברות ויש א' מן החכמים שצוה בזה ויש מי שפנע זה והביא ראיה מהיות רז"ל בטלו קריאתם עם קריאת שמע מפני המינים שהיו אומרים שיש להם יתרון על שאר התורה ואמר בהוראתו שכל איש אשר יעמוד בעת קריאת העשר דברות בספר תורה ראוי לגער בו לפי שמעשה זה הוא מדרכי המינים אשר מאמינים כי עשרת הדברות יש להם יתרון על שאר התורה לפי שכל דבר שיש למינים בו אמונה חוץ מדעת רז"ל ראוי לנו לפרסם המחלוקת עליהם..

תשובה זה שזכר החכם הא' מהישיבה בעת הקריאה הוא הראוי וראיותיו כלם אמתיים כפי דת אנשי הראות ואין להוסיף עליו וכד ראוי לעשות בכל מקום אשר מנהגם לעמוד ראוי למונעם מזה בהיות שמגיע מזה הפסד האמונה שיבוא לחשוב בתורה שיש לה יתרון קצתה על קצתה..

<p>Berachos 12a</p> <p>(The <i>kohanim</i>) read the <i>aseres hadibros</i>, along with the three sections of <i>Shema</i>, <i>emes veyatziv</i>, (paragraph following morning <i>Shema</i>) <i>avoda</i> (blessing in the <i>amida</i>), and the priestly blessing.</p> <p>R' Yehuda said in the name of Shmuel: Even in the outlying areas, they sought to recite the <i>aseres hadibros</i> in this manner every day, but they had already abolished its recitation due to the grievance of the heretics.</p>	<p>ברכות יב.</p> <p>יְקוֹרִין עֲשֶׂרֶת הַדְּבָרוֹת, שְׁמַע, וְהָיָה אִם שָׁמוֹעַ, וַיֹּאמֶר, אֲמַת וְנִצִּיב, וְעַבֹּדָה, וּבְרַכַּת כֹּהֲנִים.</p> <p>אָמַר ר' יְהוּדָה אָמַר שְׁמוּאֵל אִף בְּגִבּוּלִין בְּקִשּׁוֹ לְקֹרוֹת כִּן אֵלָּא שְׁכַבְרַת בְּטָלוּם מִפְּנֵי תַרְעוּמַת הַמֵּינִין.</p>
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Nonetheless, many *acharonim* (more recent Rabbis) including R' Moshe Feinstein (Igros Moshe OC 4:22) and R' Ephraim Greenblatt (Rivevos Ephraim 6:153:14) justify standing. R' Moshe argues that there are other passages in the Torah that we are accustomed to stand for, such as the *shira* ('Az *Yashir*' sung after the splitting of the sea) . Thus, people nowadays won't jump to such mistaken beliefs.

<p>Igros Moshe (R' Moshe Feinstein) OC 4:22</p> <p>Regarding the matter of people standing during the <i>aseres hadibros</i>, there are those that are dubious about standing, based on the Gemara, Berachos 12a: R' Yehuda said in the name of Shmuel: Even in the outlying areas, they sought to recite the <i>aseres hadibros</i> in this manner every day, but they had already abolished its recitation due to the grievance of the heretics.</p> <p>Rashi writes that the ignorant people shouldn't say that the rest of the Torah isn't true and that they should realize that everything we read – we heard from Hashem at Sinai..</p> <p>But that which you suggested that because they are accustomed to stand also at the Song of the Sea in <i>parshas Beshalach</i> and on the seventh day of Pesach.. people will understand that they stand for a different reason – is a correct answer.</p>	<p>אגרות משה או"ח ד:כב</p> <p>הִנֵּה בַדְּבָר עֲמִידַת הָעַם בְּשַׁעַת עֲשֶׂרֶת הַדְּבָרוֹת שֶׁנִּהְגוּ שֵׁישׁ מִפְּקָקִים מֵהָא דְאִתְּנָא בְּבְרַכּוֹת דְּף י"ב ע"א דְאָמַר ר' יְהוּדָה אָמַר שְׁמוּאֵל אִף בְּגִבּוּלִין בְּקִשּׁוֹ לְקֹרוֹת עֲשֶׂרֶת הַדְּבָרוֹת בְּקִרְיַאת שְׁמַע כְּמוֹ בְּמִקְדָּשׁ אֵלָּא שְׁכַבְרַת בְּטָלוּם מִפְּנֵי תַרְעוּמַת הַמֵּינִים וּפְרַשׁ"י שֶׁלֹּא יֵאמְרוּ לְעַמֵּי הָאָרֶץ אִין שְׂאָר תּוֹרָה אֲמַת וְתַדְעוּ שֶׁאִין קוֹרִין אֵלָּא מֵה שְׂאָמַר הַקַּב"ה וְשָׁמְעוּ מִפִּי בְּסִינֵי..</p> <p>אָבַל מֵה שְׂאֵתָהּ מִתַּרְץ מִחַמַּת שֶׁנִּהְגוּ לְעַמּוּד גַּם בְּשִׁירַת הַיָּם בְּפ' בְּשַׁלַּח וּבְשִׁבְעֵי שֶׁל פֶּסַח שֶׁמִּזֶּה רוֹאִין שֶׁאִיכָּא עוֹד דְּבָרִים שְׁעוֹמְדִים אִף שֶׁלֹּא שֵׁיידָ שֶׁם דְּבָרֵי הַמֵּינִים יְבִינוּ שֶׁהוּא מִטַּעַם אַחֵר הוּא תִירוֹץ נָכוֹן.</p>
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R' Ovadia Yosef (Yechaveh Da'as 1:29) disagrees, however, writing that they must not have ever read Rambam's responsum, as had they done so, they would not have written what they did.

<p>Yechave Da'as (R' Ovadia Yosef) 1:29</p> <p>Had the <i>acharonim</i> (i.e. R' Feinstein et. al.) seen Rambam's responsum speaking of his objection to the custom of standing, they certainly wouldn't have dared argue with him on this matter.</p>	<p>יחזה דעת א:כט</p> <p>וְאֵלְמָלִי רָאוּ הָאֲחֵרוֹנִים תְּשׁוּבַת הַרַמְבַּ"ם אֲשֶׁר נִגִּידִים יְדַבֵּר לְבַטֵּל הַמִּנְהַג הַזֶּה, בְּוַדָּא שֶׁלֹּא הָיוּ מְרַהֲבִים עוֹ לְחִלּוֹק עֲלָיו בְּזָה.</p>
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R' Moshe Sternbuch (Teshuvos V'hanhagos 1:144) recommends standing up *before* the *baal koreh* begins reading the *aseres hadibros* so no one will mistakenly think that the Torah is only comprised of the *aseres hadibros*. R' Ovadia Yosef notes that as the Rabbi is usually honoured with this *aliya* it would be okay to stand for him and remain standing.

<p>Teshuvos Vehanhagos (R' Moshe Sternbuch) 1:145</p> <p>All of Israel have the custom to stand during the reading of the <i>aseres hadibros</i>. The Beis Yaakov Siddur quotes this custom, concluding that individuals should not deviate from accepted custom. I challenge why we disagree with Rambam who forbade this in his responsa (46). Rambam's words are awesome and must not be dismissed. However, nowadays, we aren't concerned for the 'grievance of the heretics'..</p>	<p>תשובות והנהגות א:קמה</p> <p>נִהְגוּ כָּל יִשְׂרָאֵל לְעַמּוּד בְּעֵת קְרִיַאת עֲשֶׂרֶת הַדְּבָרוֹת, וּבְסִדּוּר בֵּית יַעֲקֹב מִבֵּיא הַמִּנְהַג וּמִסִּיק שְׂאִין לְיַחִיד לְשִׁנוֹת מֵהַמִּנְהַג, וְאִנִּי תָמָה לָמָּה לָנוּ לְחִלּוֹק עַל הַרַמְבַּ"ם שֶׁאוֹסֵר בְּתִשְׁבוּבוֹתָיו (סִימָן מו).. דְּבָרֵי הַרַמְבַּ"ם הֵם נִפְלְאִים וְאִין לְזוֹז מִמֶּנּוּ, רַק בְּזַמַּן הַזֶּה לֹא חִישְׁיָנוּ לְתַרְעוּמַת הַמֵּינִים..</p> <p>אָבַל יֵשׁ עֲצָה לְפִי עֲנִיּוֹת דְּעַתִּי לְצֵאת לְכַפְּלֵי עֲלָמָא וְכָשֶׁם שֶׁבְּקִרְיַאת שְׁמַע אִם יוֹשֵׁב אֲסוּר</p>
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According to my humble opinion, there is a solution that would satisfy all opinions. Just as one sitting while reciting the *shema* mustn't stand, though is allowed to stand before he starts, so too here it is appropriate to stand a little *before* the reading of the *aseres hadibros* so that it is not apparent that they are standing just for the *aseres hadibros*..

לְעִמּוּד אֲבָל יִכַּל לְעִמּוּד קִדְּם שְׂמִינִיעַ לְקִרְיַת
שְׁמִיעַ, גַּם כָּאֵן רְאוּי לְעִמּוּד קִצָּת קִדְּם קִרְיַת
עֲשֶׂרֶת הַדְּבָרוֹת וְלֹא מִמֶּשׁ לְעֲשֶׂרֶת הַדְּבָרוֹת
שֶׁלֹּא יְהֵא מוֹכַח שְׂעוּמִד רַק לְעֲשֶׂרֶת
הַדְּבָרוֹת..

Nonetheless, R' Moshe writes that whatever one's individual practice, one must join in with everyone else, and not go against the norm. While the individual may not have much choice, the *tzibbur* (community) should either remain seated throughout or stand for the whole *aliya*.

In conclusion, there are good reasons both to sit and stand, and both are acceptable customs. While there are various compromises suggested, it is important that one does not turn something like this into a *machlokes* (argument).

Rambam (1138, Córdoba, Spain - 1204, Fustat, Egypt)

R' Moshe Feinstein (1895, Uzda, Belarus - 1986, New York, New York)

R' Ephraim Greenblatt (1932, Jerusalem – 2014, Jerusalem)

R' Ovadia Yosef (1920, Baghdad, Iraq - 2013, Jerusalem)

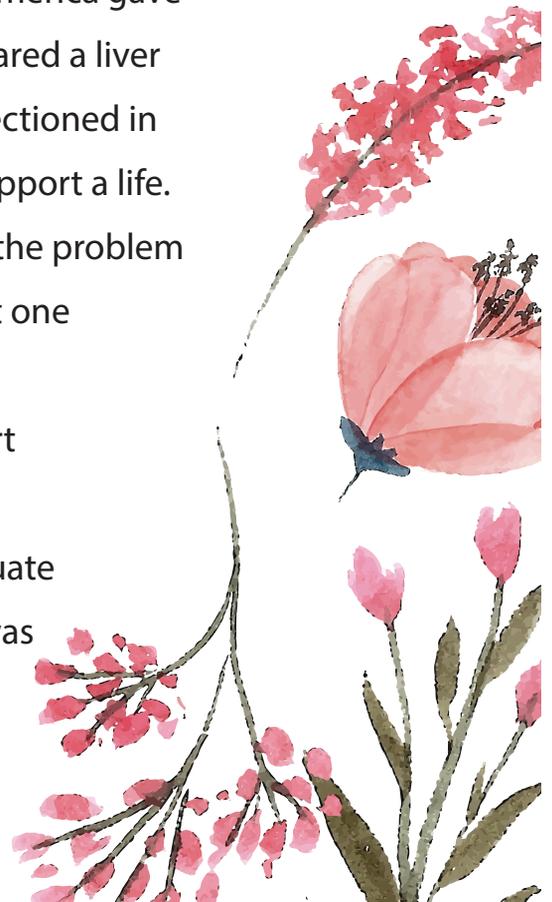
R' Moshe Sternbuch (b. 1928, London)



Based on a lecture given by Rabbi Dr Akiva Tatz

Siamese twins are identical twins whose bodies are fused at some point. The way that they develop is that one fertilised ovum, instead of splitting totally, remains attached at some point. In the US in 1961 there were twins born who were joined at the head. A common permutation is that they are joined at the chest/ abdomen. The reason that they are referred to as Siamese twins- on 11 May 1811, Chang and Eng Bunker were born in Siam (modern day Thailand). They were brought to the US and to the UK and were exhibited in circuses. They later settled in the US as farmers and married two sisters. (Incidentally, this is a big problem in Halacha. Even if the twins are almost completely separate, a marriage requires privacy) There was a case where one twin wanted to marry but the other objected on grounds of modesty. The judge resolved the case- he ordered the objecting sister to stand, and she was unable to do so. He then ordered the other twin to stand, and she did so dragging her sister with her. He ruled that she was dominant, and was allowed to marry. She did marry, and the report says that the second sister died of shame and pain, and due to being attached to a decomposing corpse, the other sister died sometime later. Incidentally, conjoined twins often have very different personalities even though they may be identical and share a common cardio-vascular system. The Gemara states that no two human beings have the same soul structure. The original Siamese twins died within hours of each other, living into their 60s. The history is fascinating.

In 1977, an observant Jewish family in a small town in eastern America gave birth to conjoined twins, joined at the upper abdomen. They shared a liver (that is not necessarily a surgical challenge- the liver could be sectioned in a way that leaves enough liver tissue in each child in order to support a life. The normal human liver could support two children). However, the problem was that the first doctor to examine the twins could only detect one heartbeat. The heart turned out to be an abnormally fused six chambered heart. The tissue dividing the two halves of this heart was too thin to cut it into two organs, and even if it could have been cut, the two chambered heart would have not been adequate to function and support the circulation of that twin. The heart was also not positioned centrally, rather was more in the chest of what was known as baby girl B. Baby girl B was much more placid and restful than baby girl A.



The children were flown to Philadelphia where there is a major paediatric cardiac surgery facility. The surgeon in charge was Dr Everett Koop. He was a very religious Protestant Christian. In addition to this, the hospital was a Catholic institution. The case was heard in the High Court of the US- the reason being that it was proposed to kill one child, and Dr Koop was anxious that someone may charge him or the hospital with homicide. He therefore wanted a court order to authorise surgery to protect them from any prosecution.

The very difficult moral, ethical and religious dilemma was that if nothing was done, it was clear that both would die- the heart would fail to support two growing children. In all previous cases of this abnormality, they always died. A preserved heart from similar twins was flown in from Colombia in order to allow the surgeons to study the anatomy. They weren't sure what they would find when they would open up the chest of the twins. Incidentally another challenge was that the hospital decided to use two separate sets of anaesthetists- one for each child's respiratory function. However, anything that one team would do would affect the second child, because they shared a blood stream.

It took the hospital eleven days to put together a team of volunteers to do the surgery. On the 21st day of their lives, the twins actually went into heart failure and needed to be kept in the ICU. It was clear that surgery had to be done soon. There were several options:

Option 1

Leaving the heart in baby B and transplanting a heart into baby A. This was thought of, but was discarded. This case was in 1977 and new-born heart transplants had never been done. Even today it is uncommon- there are almost never new-born hearts available, and to find a fully functional donated heart is rare. The first time a new-born heart was successfully transplanted was in 1985 in California. The surgeon was Jewish and he had a new-born child in heart failure. They managed to locate a heart in Vermont, 3000 miles away. They put a young surgeon into a hired jet and flew him across the country. He took the heart, placed it into a box of cardioplegic solution and jumped back onto the waiting jet. It refused to start. They managed to scramble a US Air Force supersonic fighter, and they put the terrified surgeon in the back, with the heart on his lap.



When they got to California, they had to resuscitate the surgeon, and they successfully transplanted it into the child.

Option 2

Leave the heart in baby girl B and insert an artificial pump into baby girl A. Even for adults this is problematic, and certainly wasn't an option for a new-born.

Option 3.

Transplanting an animal organ into baby A. The animal most similar to us physiologically is the pig. (In Halacha, there is no issue at all in transplanting pig organs- the prohibition is only to eat from a pig. Additionally, in a scenario where one's life is in danger, one may even consume forbidden foods, so there is definitely no kashrut problem with this option.) Pig tissues and valves work well in humans but pig organs aren't an option- chances of rejection are high. The only remaining option was sacrificing girl A- Dr Koop proposed to leave the entire heart in baby B, separate off baby A, carry her body over to a sterile surgical table and to use some of her ribs to close off the chest cavity of baby B.

Very tough.

There are many Halachic issues that this raises. One is the question of selection. This is a very relevant question for a doctor. Stepping into a casualty department, there are many patients who are seriously injured. Who does the doctor treat first if they are the only pair of hands available and they can't tend to everyone? In Halacha, there is a well-oiled pathway to deal with prioritisation. Briefly, if all else is equal the casualty who is closest to the entering doctor is tended to first. The logic- treating a patient is a huge mitzvah, and we don't pass by a mitzvah. If both patients are equidistant, a relative comes first; the source is from Isaiah 58:7 "From your flesh you should not hide" i.e. do not ignore your own kin. What if one is closer but your family member is further away? Halacha still dictates that the family member comes first. However, our scenario is much more complex than this. It isn't that we are deciding which girl to save first. We are dealing with which girl to actively kill.

What happened? The family went to their Rabbi and that Rabbi went to his Rabbi until it reached the desk of Rabbi Moshe Feinstein (1895-1986). Rabbi Feinstein was the leading halachic authority of his time and his rulings were accepted worldwide. Rabbi Feinstein was a dedicated and selfless leader for the Jewish people to whom anyone could approach at any time with any problem. He tried to refuse to take the case but there was no one else, so he had no option but to give a Halachic ruling.



He later stated that it was the most difficult ruling involving life and death that he ever had to issue.

At the same time that the surgical team were being selected, Rabbi Feinstein took eleven days deliberating the matter. He discussed it with his family- his son in law who is a professor in biology and a grandson who is the head of a hospital in Netanya. They told him all that he needed to know in order to fully understand the medical and technical issues so that he could issue a ruling based on Torah sources. All human situations are contained in the Torah; however, it takes broad shoulders to correctly identify which areas of Jewish law forms the precedents for this case.

During his deliberation, a number of interesting questions were directed towards Dr Koop. Rabbi Feinstein asked if these girls are one human being or two. The practical difference is huge. If they are two separate beings, then we enter into the broader question of whether the Torah allows us to kill one to save another. In Halacha, we don't prioritise life, so we wouldn't normally kill one to save a second. However, if they are one human, then it isn't killing one to save the second; it is amputation, and that is not just allowed, but even obligatory in this situation. Side question- is one obligated to sacrifice a limb to save someone else's life? Kidney donation is certainly not obligatory to save another, because it isn't simply donating a kidney, but there are also the risks involved. However, to donate a limb which poses no danger to life, is one obligated? There was a famous case in the times of the Radvaz (Rabbi David Ben Zimri 1480-1574) in Egypt. There was a Jew in Turkey who was accused of stealing- an offence that incurred the punishment of the severing of the hand. The Jew fled to Egypt. The sultan in Turkey imprisoned another Jew and sent to the accused Jew in Egypt- if you return then this Jew will be released and you will lose your hand. If you don't return, then this Jew will be killed. Did he have to sacrifice his hand to save the other Jew. The Radvaz wrote a lengthy piece on this question, and reached the Halachic conclusion that although it would be extremely meritorious to return in order to save the Jew, he wasn't Halachically obligated to do so. Therefore generally, one is not obligated to donate a limb to save the life of another.

Returning to our case, it was definitely assumed that the girls were indeed two individuals. Rabbi Feinstein then asked as follows; you are planning to operate to kill baby A and to save baby B. Is it possible to reverse the procedure, i.e. to save baby A by sacrificing baby B? Dr Koop sent back that it was extremely challenging to carry out the procedure even the way that it was originally proposed, and it was unthinkable to reverse it.



Why did Rabbi Feinstein want to know this? He obviously didn't want the surgeon to change the plan, so why was this question relevant?

In Halacha, how is it permissible to murder one to save another? The Gemara brings a concept named "Rodef." If person A is chasing after B to kill him or her, the onlooker is obligated Halachically to kill person A to prevent the murder of B, unless A can be stopped another way, e.g. by shooting him in the foot. Not only is the onlooker obligated to kill A, but B him/ herself should try to take the pre-emptive strike.

A different scenario- Paul the apostle approaches Jew B and demands that he/ she kills Jew A, and states that if not, he himself will kill THE TWO of them. In Halacha Jew B is forbidden to kill A (the logic given in the Gemara is that who is B to actively decide if whose life is worth more- their own or that of A?) How do we reconcile this Halacha with the concept of Rodef? Here B cannot kill A whereas in the case of Rodef, B should kill A. The difference is that as long as A is not the aggressor, A is faultless and may not be killed by B, even if both will ultimately lose their lives. However, in the case of Rodef, A is the aggressor and therefore may be neutralised.

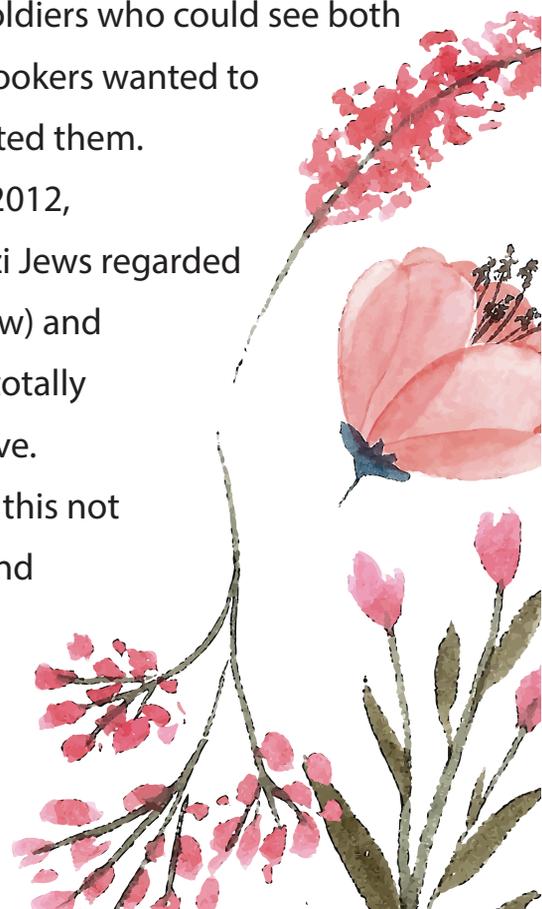
This Halacha is relevant in the medical world with regards to abortion. If the unborn foetus is placing the mother at risk, despite the lack of any malicious intention, Maimonides rules that the pregnancy should be terminated, as the foetus is the "aggressor." (Interestingly, the laws of abortion are more severe for Gentiles. One of the seven Noachide Laws is Murder. Abortion for a Gentile is considered murder, whereas for a Jew, it is still forbidden but isn't classified as murder.)

In 1973 in Israel, there was a horrific incident in the Sinai in which a group of IDF soldiers were in mortal danger from friendly fire. There was a third group of IDF soldiers who could see both groups, but they couldn't alert the shooters. A number of the onlookers wanted to shoot at the shooters to stop them, but the other soldiers prevented them.

Afterwards they approached Rabbi Yosef Shalom Elyashiv (1910-2012, a world-renowned scholar and halachic authority. Most Ashkenazi Jews regarded him as the absolute contemporary leading authority on Jewish law) and asked him if the third party should have shot. He said that it was totally forbidden to shoot, and they did the correct thing by being passive.

How does this ruling not contradict the concept of Rodef? Why is this not similar to the foetus who is placing the life of the mother at risk and

therefore should be aborted through the actions of the doctor? The shooters have no malicious intent but are endangering the other group, as is the foetus to the mother. Once again, we can apply the logic mentioned earlier. The Halacha of Rodef applies when there is an aggressor.



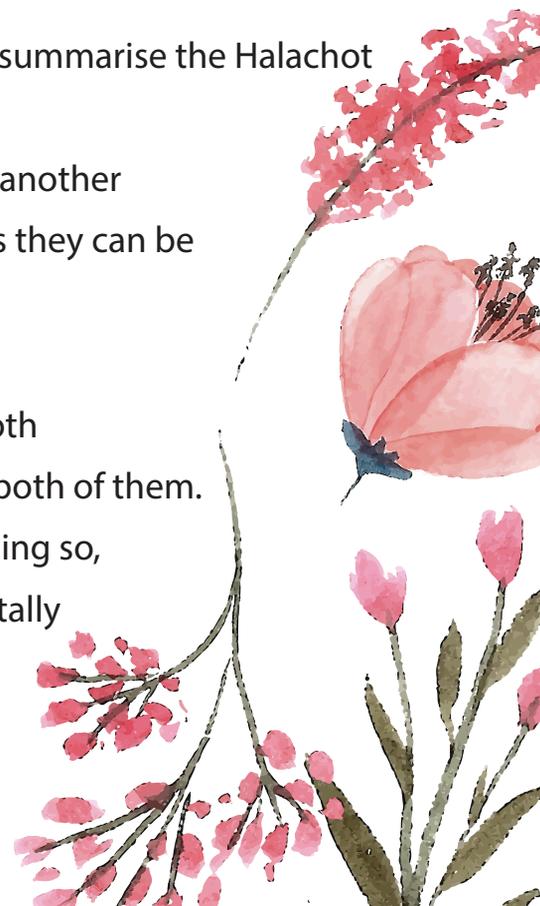
The Halachic definition of an aggressor is one who is unjustly, albeit unknowingly, placing the life of another in danger. The soldiers are therefore not classified as aggressors. In times of war or ongoing threats to the security of the State of Israel, shooting at terrorists is not unjust. True, it was a disastrous mistake, but in terms of what they were consciously doing, they were acting within the realm of Halachic law. They therefore were not classified as a Rodef, and to shoot at them would have been murder. The foetus on the other hand, albeit without any intention, is unjustly placing the life of the mother at risk, and so falls under the category of a Rodef, and therefore tragically must be aborted.

One last Halacha before returning to the case of the twins. The following question was asked to Rabbi Feinstein in a different occasion; two individuals jump from a plane, and the parachute of only one of them opens. The unfortunate one grabs hold of the leg of the lucky one (who just became unlucky), and they begin falling much faster due to the combined weight that is too much for one parachute. Can the one who was lucky to begin with, kick off his "friend" in order to save his own life? The alternative is that both will certainly die. The Gemara discusses a case where two people are stranded in the desert and there is only one flask of water. If both drink from it, neither will reach a populated area and will certainly die of thirst. If one drinks it, he will reach civilisation but the other will die. Rabbi Akiva states that the owner of the flask is obligated to keep it for himself- one's own life takes precedence. Therefore, it would be Halachically just for the possessor of the functioning parachute to kick his friend off his leg in order to save his own life. (Once again, his friend unjustly grabbed onto him and is an aggressor- one cannot actively kill someone else in order to save their own life. In the scenario of the desert, he isn't actively killing his friend, rather he is retaining that which is rightfully his.)

Before continuing with the Siamese twin question, we will briefly summarise the Halachot we have mentioned.

1. An aggressor (that is, one who is unjustly placing the life of another in danger) may be neutralised by the victim or an onlooker, unless they can be prevented without taking their life.
2. That is the case even if the aggression is not malicious.
3. If there is no aggressor and all is equal, (Paul the apostle) both parties are forbidden to act, even if this will result in the death of both of them.
4. One may not extend that which is theirs to another, if by doing so, it will certainly endanger their own life. If the other will die, it is totally passive and there is no Halachic aggressor here.

We now understand the question that Rabbi Feinstein posed to Dr Koop.



Were it possible to reverse the procedure, and to potentially do it either way, then in Halacha neither baby A nor baby B would be more of an aggressor. Both would be equally endangering the life of the other, and neither would be termed a Rodef, in which case it would be forbidden to kill one to save the other (Halacha 3). This is so even though the outcome will be the death of both. As mentioned, the logic is that no human can make the decision of whose life is worth more.

The response of Dr Koop was that it was unthinkable to reverse the operation. Therefore, it became clear that baby A was the Halachic aggressor, despite the lack of malicious intent (Halacha 2), and baby B was the Halachic victim, so it was obligatory to terminate the life of baby A to save the life of baby B (Halacha 1).

There were definitely more background arguments to this Halachic verdict- this is just a sample of some of those issues considered.

The High Court held a private hearing, issuing a verdict authorising surgery, in order to legally protect the Hospital. One argument put forward by the lawyers was as follows; in secular law, the present definition of death is brain- stem death. However, when this case occurred in 1977 in Philadelphia, the law there was that death is defined as cessation of spontaneous heartbeat. This runs with Halacha; when the heart stops beating, that is death. So the lawyers argued that baby A will be separated off and the heart will continue beating in baby B. Since no heart stops beating, no one is dying. Interestingly, this argument would allow one to hack out someone's heart, keep it beating and chop the person into French Fries, with no legal prosecution. This may be within the letter of the law but certainly isn't in the spirit of the law. The judges obviously threw this particular argument out of court. In Torah, there are no strange loopholes- it is a divine system with no weird escape clauses. Said Rabbi Samson Raphael Hirsch (1808-1888 German Orthodox rabbi who had a considerable influence on the development of Orthodox Judaism)

"In a democracy, the people make the law. In Torah, the law makes the people".

Surgery went ahead. The team of surgeons opened up their livers without any incident. Dr Koop insisted on being the one who would do the difficult step of tying off the major vessels of baby A. She died instantly. He carried over her body to a prepared table, but it ended up being unnecessary to use her ribs to close up the chest of baby B. It closed with all the anatomical relations in the normal place, containing this abnormal six- chambered heart.

He personally returned the body of baby A to the family before sunset so that she could be buried in accordance with Halacha.

Those present say that it was a tremendous Kiddush H'-sanctification of G-d's name, to see the family go along with the process as required by the Torah.



CORONA VIRUS IN HALOCHA- Rabbi Shimon Buckman

Introduction: With an ever present risk of infection and social distancing guidelines in place, what does the Jewish Law require a person to do? Provided here are sources from the Halacha (Jewish Law), and some points to ponder, which apply to the current circumstances.

PART 1: Your responsibility to look after yourself

1 – דברים ד"ט / Devarim 4:9

רָקֵה שְׁמֶרְךָ וּשְׁמֵר נַפְשְׁךָ מְאֹד

But take utmost care and watch yourselves scrupulously.

2 – גמרא שבת לב. / Gemora Shabbos 32a

לְעוֹלָם אֵל יַעֲמֹד אָדָם בְּמִקוֹם סִכָּנָה לֹא יִשְׁמַח אִין עוֹשִׂין לוֹ גֵּס. וְאִם עוֹשִׂין לוֹ גֵּס — מִנְכִּין לוֹ מִזְכִּיּוֹתָיו.

A person should never stand in a place of danger saying that Hashem will perform a miracle for him, lest in the end He does not perform a miracle for him. And even if He does perform a miracle for him, He will deduct it from his merits.

3 – רמ"א יו"ד קטז"ה / Ramo on Shulchan Aruch YD 116:5

וְכֵן יִזְהַר מִכָּל דְּבָרִים הַמְּבִיאִים לְיָדֵי סִכָּנָה כִּי סִכָּנָה חֲמִירָא מֵאִסוּרָא וְיֵשׁ לְחוּשׁ יוֹתֵר לְסַפֵּק סִכָּנָה מִלְּסַפֵּק אִסוּר.

Similarly, one should be careful of all things that cause danger, because danger is stricter than transgressions, and one should be more careful with an uncertain danger than with an uncertain *prohibited food*.



PART 2: Social distancing during a pandemic

4 – גמרא ב"ק ס: / Gemora Bava Kama 60b

ת"ר דבר בעיר כנס רגליך שנאמר ואתם לא תצאו איש מפתח ביתו עד בקר ואומר מחוץ (דברים לב. כה) לך עמי בא בחדריך וסגור דלתיך בעדך ואומר (ישעיהו כו. כ) תשכל חרב ומחדרים אימה

If there is plague in the city, gather your feet, i.e., limit the time you spend out of the house, as it is stated in the verse: "And none of you shall go out of the opening of his house until the morning." And it says in another verse: "Come, my people, enter into your chambers, and shut your doors behind you; hide yourself for a little moment, until the anger has passed by" ([Isaiah 26:20](#)). And it says: "Outside the sword will bereave, and in the chambers terror" ([Deuteronomy 32:25](#)).

5 – גמרא ב"ק / Gemora continued

ת"ר דבר בעיר אל יהלך אדם באמצע הדרך מפני שמלאך המות מהלך באמצע הדרכים דכיון דיהיבא ליה רשותא מסגי להדיא שלום בעיר אל יהלך בצדי דרכים דכיון דלית ליה רשותא מחבי חבוי ומסגי

If there's a plague in the city, a person should not walk in the middle of the road, due to the fact that the Angel of Death walks in the middle of the road, as, since in Heaven they have given him permission to kill within the city, he goes openly in the middle of the road.

6 – רמ"א / Ramo continued

לברוח מן העיר כשדבר בעיר ויש לצאת מן העיר בתחילת הדבר ולא בסופו. וכל אלו הדברים הם משום סכנה ושומר נפשו ירחק מהם ואסור לסמוך אנס או לסכן נפשו.

Flee from the city when a plague is in the city, and one should leave at the beginning of the plague and not at the end. All of these things are because of the danger, and a person who guards their soul will distance themselves from them and it is prohibited to rely on a miracle.



PART 3: Someone who breaks the rules of social distancing

7 – גמרא סנהדרין עג. / Gemora Sanhedrin 83a

ואלו הן שמצילין אותן בנפשן הרודף אחר חבירו להרגו

And these are the ones who are saved from transgressing even at the cost of their lives; that is to say, these people may be killed so that they do not perform a transgression: One who pursues another to kill him.

- We learn from here about the concept of a *rodef* – pursuer.
- **Question:** Do people who break social distancing rules have the halachic status of a *rodef*, such that you would be allowed to kill them?

The following points will all need to be considered:

- 1) The typical case of *rodef* is where the “chase” has already begun and one person is actively pursuing another.
- 2) The typical case of *rodef* is where there’s intent to kill.
- 3) There is a doubt whether breaking social distancing will cause someone to die. In fact, it is a 3-fold doubt:
 - i) Who says any given person is a carrier?
 - ii) Even if they are, who says they will infect others?
 - iii) Even if they will, who says anyone who gets infected through this chain will die?

We shall now investigate these 3 considerations, one by one.

8 – גמרא סנהדרין עב. / Gemora Sanhedrin 82a

הבא במחתרת נידון על שם סופו

A burglar who is found breaking into a house may be killed by the owner of the house (see [Exodus 22:1](#)). He too is sentenced on account of his



ultimate end, as it is presumed that if the owner of the house would resist the burglar, the burglar would kill the owner of the house.

[Rashi - Because the burglar anticipates that the owner will put up fight, and the burglar is therefore prepared to fight it out to the death.]

- How can we resolve the 1st consideration from here?
- There is however a counter argument here based upon the following distinction: In the Gemora the fight to the death is presumed to be inevitable; although the spreading of the virus is inevitable if everyone breaks the rules, but on no given occasion can we say that because you broke the rules on this occasion someone will certainly die.

9 – משנה אוהלות ז"ו / Mishnah Ohalos 7:6

האשה שְׁהיא מְקַשָּׁה לִילָד, מִחַתְּכִין אֶת הַיֶּלֶד בְּמַעֲיָה וּמוֹצִיאִין אוֹתוֹ אֲבָרִים אֲבָרִים, מִפְּנֵי שְׁחִיָּה קוֹדְמִין לַחַיִּי.

If a woman is having trouble giving birth, they may kill the fetus in her womb, because her life comes before the life of the child.

- There are 2 different reasons given why the Mishnah rules this way:

12 – רש"י / Rashi

דכל זמן שלא יצא לאויר העולם לאו נפש הוא וניתן להורגו ולהציל את אמו.

Before the fetus has left the womb it is not yet deemed a fully-living being, and therefore one may kill it in order to save the mother.

11 – רמב"ם / Rambam

מִתֵּר לְחַתְּךָ הָעֶבֶר בְּמַעֲיָה בֵּין בְּסֵם בֵּין בַּיָּד מִפְּנֵי שֶׁהוּא כְּרוּדֵף אַחֲרֶיהָ לְהַרְגָּהּ.

It is permitted to abort the fetus in her womb, whether with a knife or with medicine. For the fetus is considered a *rodef* to its mother.



- How can we resolve the 2nd consideration according to the Rambam?
 - Why can the 2nd consideration not be resolved according to Rashi?
 - **Note:** the Shulchan Aruch CM 425:2 rules like the Rambam over Rashi in this matter.
-
- How could we attempt to resolve the 3rd consideration from the Rambam?
 - There is however, a counter argument here based upon the following distinction: Perhaps one may only kill a *rodef* for a single doubt, as is the case with the fetus, but not for a 3-fold doubt.

12 – גמרא סנהדרין עד. / Gemora Sanhedrin 74a

רבי יונתן בן שאול אומר רודף שהיה רודף אחר חבירו להורגו ויכול להצילו באחד מאבריו ולא הציל נהרג עליו

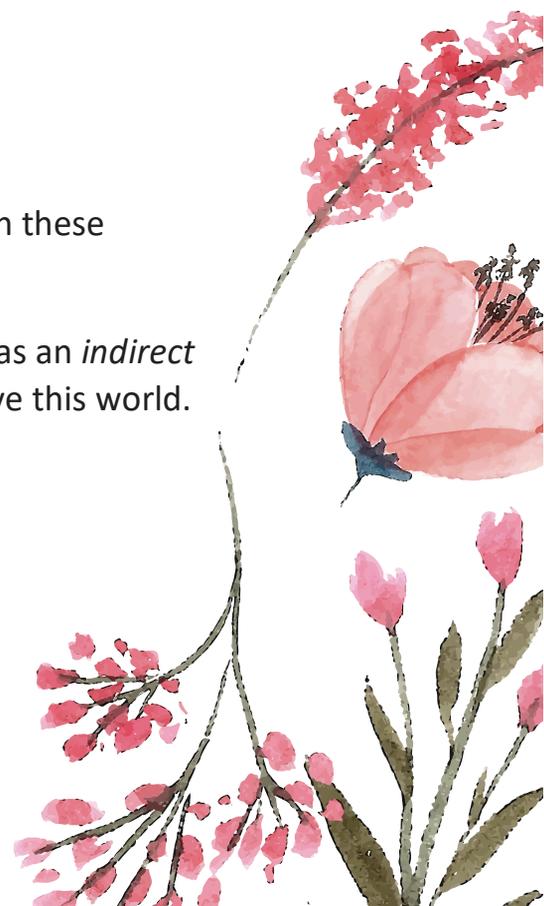
Rabbi Yonatan ben Shaul says: If a pursuer was pursuing another to kill him, and one was able to save the pursued party without killing the pursuer, but instead by injuring him in one of his limbs, but he did not save him in this manner and rather chose to kill him, he is executed on his account as a murderer.

- We see from here there is in fact a 4th consideration:
- If you are able to stop the *rodef* without actually killing him, then you are obligated to do so.
- How will that influence the subject of people breaking social distancing rules?

In conclusion:

We most definitely CANNOT permit killing someone based upon these findings.

However, someone who is negligent may be viewed by Hashem as an *indirect rodef*, and will have to face a serious punishment when they leave this world.



Social distancing, lock-down, quarantine. The new norm has affected everyone in our community. One five year old child reading a story wanted to know why the characters were within two meters of each other if they didn't come from the same house! With all the hardship that this has brought we have spoken to many who have found light at this time with a different and fresh perspective. Here are some of their thoughts: How has lockdown changed your Shabbat experience?

Rebbetzen Kleiman shared: 'It feels very strange being unable to go to Shul and to catch up with familiar faces in the Kiddush. I really miss having guests at our Shabbat table - though it's great to have all my boys back!'

What is the hardest part of lockdown for you?

Daniel Sacks explained that the hardest part of lockdown for him can be the sense of isolation on Shabbat; 'My shabbat experience has totally changed. The lack of Shul and especially krias haTorah feels extremely weird. There's also a slight feeling of isolation as you can't see people or even speak over the phone. But it's been a great opportunity to catch up on reading.'

Rafi Kleiman shared: 'The hardest thing about lockdown for me has been maintaining the same sense of routine I had before lockdown. The urge to wake up later, Daven later & 'get on with jobs' later is so much stronger when you're confined to your home (bar exercise of course!). So the challenge of keeping up that sense of healthy habit and making the most of every minute has certainly been real! Though as they say, there's no challenge we're given which is designed to make us fail - and if we do 'fail', our blips serve as parts of the ultimately successful journey. So BH for the challenge!' Rafi also shared the lighter side of lockdown- 'Our Sandhill Mount Clap for Carers at 20:00 on a Thursday is always a ball. In addition to the awesome and genuine display of gratitude which our road produces, be sure to hear various clanging sounds of pots & pans, NHS-themed football chants and the occasional firework bang! We're a lively bunch!'

What is the silver lining in all this for you?

Rebbetzen Kleiman shared- 'The lockdown has been hard for so many people on so many levels. It has been heartwarming to see the huge number of people that have come forward to help others in creative ways.'

Claire Brown shared how she is finding meaning and purpose at this time in so many ways.

'So many people have been in touch to thank me for the feeling of connection they get from watching the cookery demonstrations and getting involved. All the amazing pictures of freshly baked cheesecakes; some not even making it to a picture out of the oven before being started! My passion for the baking combined with passion for our incredible community make the cookery sessions and all the work that goes into them so worthwhile.'



The silver-lining in all this is that cookery demonstrations in shul are limited to the number of mixing bowls and equipment the shul has. The cheesecake demonstration on Zoom was able to involve 40 people!

Making and giving challah to people gives me such a sense of pride to be part of such a special community!

Daniel shared how he has found the lack of routine a rewarding experience- 'It's been really great to just take a break from the busy and crazy life that normally ensues. The lack of a 9-5 kind of day has been quite nice.'

Rafi described the main lessons he has learnt from living in lock-down-

'So here's three real lessons that I've taken from this most bizarre of times:

1. There's always opportunities! Despite the crux of our schedules disappearing, if we look properly, finding alternative things to learn and do is so much easier than it seems. For example, in the era of Zoom, I've been connected to a Y3 student in London to tutor Key Stage 2 Level Maths - and I thought I had bid academic Maths farewell after my GCSEs!! However, the past few weeks have been so fulfilling for me (and I hope for the student!) and I know that without these unparalleled circumstances, it is unlikely I would have had this chance to become fulfilled!

2. A pause is super healthy - these past few months have taught me the importance of moderating our hustle-and-bustle. How often do we get a chance to take a step back and reflect on ourselves & our time without the usual distractions which we often refer to as 'life'?

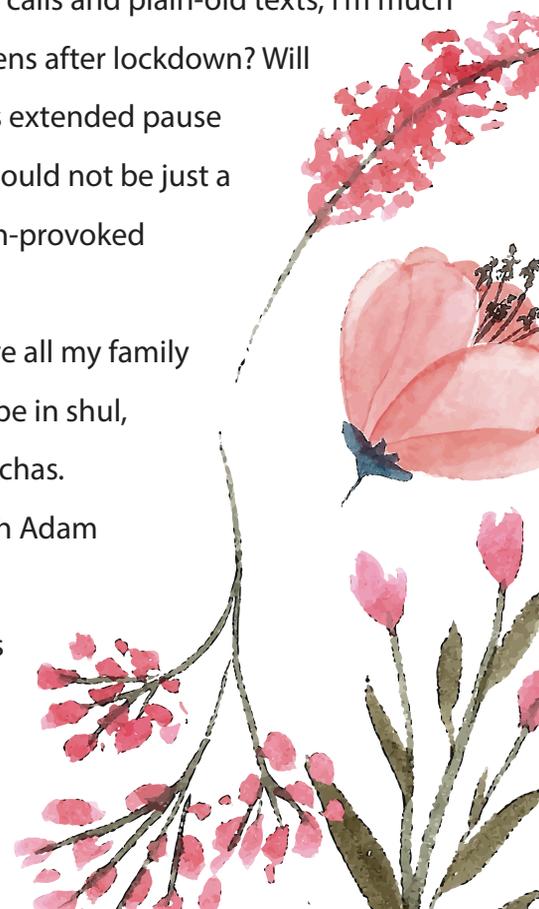
(Yes I know we have Shabbat for that but still...). Well, this period has been that wishful halt. And I guess the question is how well do we maximise this opportunity? Not to worry, we still have time to do some introspection...

3. Stay Connected - linked to point 2, this pause has given rise to an epiphany. How many of my 'close' friends & family am I really consistently connected to? The answer in mid-March was pretty underwhelming. Now, writing in mid-May, I'm glad to say that, after lots of Zooms, WhatsApp calls and plain-old texts, I'm much prouder of my answer. Though the challenge will be what next? What happens after lockdown? Will these renewed relationships dwindle like yesteryear? Again, perhaps it's this extended pause which has taught us that our Chessed and Areivut (close-connectedness) should not be just a reactive thing in response to events that affect us all but rather ideally, a non-provoked Chessed & Areivut that should exist regardless of our circumstances.'

Claire expressed another positive side to lockdown- 'The opportunity to have all my family together has completely changed our Shabbat experience. Whilst I cannot be in shul, having all of my boys home keeps me extremely busy but also filled with nachas.

We shared a family barbeque where I sat and spent time with the family with Adam manning the barbeque; it was just magical!'

This Shavuot we are apart but we pray that we feel the 'magical' sides of this time; the chessed, the Torah that never leaves us and the amazing community that we are a part of.



Rivka and Andrew Tunick.

Kashrut – ensuring what we eat is Kosher, has a big connection to Shavuot. So what is it like to be a Shomer – a guardian of Kashrut for the community?

We are very grateful to Rivka and Andrew Tunick, both who work as Shomrim in Leeds, who agreed to answer some questions for us.

Why did you decided to become a shomer?

Rivka; I came across the word 'shomer' (guard in Hebrew) and started to become fascinated by the concept of kashrut operating in a small community, where very few people had the knowledge to do this. I decided to attend a ladies learning group that covered kashrut in detail. I came to realise that kashrut is the fundamental basis of Jewish life and wanted to become directly involved.

Less than a year after I arrived in Leeds, Dayan Refson asked me to be a shomeret (or 'mashgiach'). I was delighted to accept.

Andrew; There was and still is a relative shortage of shomrim in Leeds. Given the importance of the job, I was delighted to accept Dayan Refson's invitation. Originally, I combined being a mashgiach while simultaneously being a school teacher. Now, I essentially work full time for the Beth Din.

Who does a shomer work for?

The Beth Din. Until his very untimely passing, all shomrim were appointed by Dayan Refson (May his memory be a blessing).

What do you find most fascinating and interesting about the position?

Andrew; One often has to multitask, which I found challenging. You have to deal with professional caterers, simcha clients and families, and many people and senior Rabbis. Each job is different one way or another, but there is an inner satisfaction when it is accomplished. Essentially, everyone is eating kosher food, irrespective of their level of religious observance or personal perspective. In Hashem's eyes all Jews are equal, and eating kosher food together shows we are one people

Rivka; I really enjoy putting my Torah learning into practice. I never stop increasing my knowledge and awareness about both the unique spiritual quality and importance of kosher food for our people. A shomer enables all Jewish people to feed and nourish not just our physical body, but also our holy souls!

How does one decide if food is kosher or not?.

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A shomer enables all Jewish people to feed and nourish not just our physical body, but also our holy souls!

How does one decide if food is kosher or not?

Obviously the basic kashrut instructions come from our holy Torah given to us by Hashem on Shavuot at Har Sinai, particularly in Parashat Shemini. In a direct sense the shomer will always closely examine all relevant hechshers, check when necessary the London Beth Din's kosher Food Guide, and the linked "Is it Kosher" internet site. Shomers also receive e-mail updates informing us of any recent changes. Moreover, for food to be kosher, all cooking processes, ovens, tables, cutlery and utensil surfaces must be both checked and constantly supervised, whether in terms of preparation, serving, eating and clearing away of all kosher equipment. In today's world of pre-packaged food, why is a shomer still necessary?

In essence, because a shomer has to ensure that all aspects of the kashrut process are totally adhered to. For example fish and meat products cannot be on the same place or table. Is the appropriate cutlery being used for a meat, dairy or parev meal?

During the shmitta year, all shomrim get very detailed instructions on what Israeli food items can or cannot be consumed (It's a far more complicated situation than one may think)! Is the wine mevushal or not, ovens in essentially non-kosher locations have to be thoroughly cleaned and fired up at maximum temperature.

All drinks have to be very carefully checked – is there non-supervised grape juice in a pre bottled cocktail?

A shomer starts a preparation off by lighting the ovens, checking vegetables and fruits that need this supervision, whether they are raspberries, broccoli or asparagus to name but a few challenging food products.

The mashgiach also ensures that all Beth Din rules are adhered to. For example, tea bags must not be used on Shabbat, all lettuce must be pre-washed and then visually examined, and sprouts are regarded as too difficult and time consuming to check, so they are not allowed in Leeds.

When the mashgiach quite literally "puts her or his cards on the table", everybody knows they can just relax and enjoy the food!

What are the most glamorous locations that you have both worked at?

Rivka; I have really enjoyed the glamour of working in various Harrogate locations and the surrounding countryside. The view from The Ridding Park hotel complex is absolutely stunning, not to mention

the fabulous room paintings and chandeliers.

The staff in The Crown Hotel were a pleasure to work with, while the interior fittings were also most elaborate.

I must conclude that being a shomeret in The Old Swan Hotel was very memorable, not least with the large plaque noting the famous stay of Agatha Christie.



Andrew; My wife is too modest to mention our wonderful weekend at The Crown Hotel. Rivka had to start supervision work 30 minutes after Shabbat covering a most glamorous bar mitzvah dinner. We had no choice but to arrive on Friday afternoon with catered Celia Clyne food throughout Shabbat, and indeed Sunday morning as the function ended in the earlier hours. It was even more enjoyable for me as I absolutely had no work to do!

I also enjoyed working at BHH, when I supervised the buffet and personally met the football superstar, Kevin Keegan!

Can you remember any especially important, difficult or even amusing situations you have both had to resolve?

Andrew; A few years ago there was a wedding at BHH. The very proud mother brought in three cases of "kosher" Martini wine. I scrupulously checked the label which contained lots of Italian but absolutely no hechsher. The lady had been misinformed by a now defunct off license, and she had no problem removing all the wine cases.

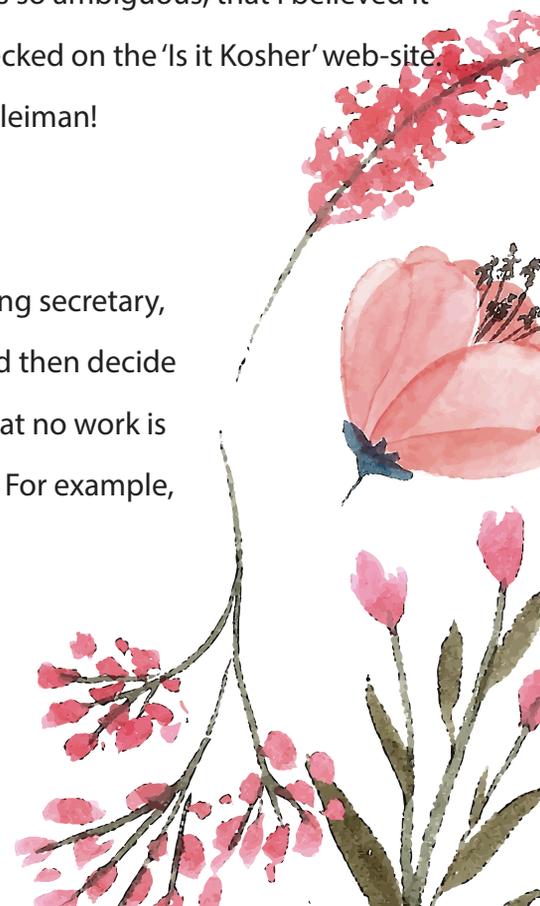
However, the event planner had printed this "non-kosher" item on the silk embossed drinks menus, which, she said, would ruin the table design if removed. For once in my life I had an original idea. The staff were instructed by me to glue the menus together hiding the name of the forbidden drink, but keeping the table shapes intact!

Rivka; I was working in the Mansion at Roundhay Park. The new 'sugar tax' had recently been introduced and all shomrim had been instructed to carefully check that non-supervised grape juice was not being used to reduce sugar content in bottled drinks. Consequently I checked all the bar drinks even more carefully than I normally would! I found a bottled drink where the bottle label wording was so ambiguous, that I believed it was quite likely that the drink had non-kosher ingredients. So, I double checked on the 'Is it Kosher' web-site. It was not listed, so I ordered its removal, gaining great praise from Rabbi Kleiman!

When does a shomer need to arrive at a designated place of work?

All supervised meals must be pre-booked through the Beth Din. The booking secretary, Mrs. Sandra Richmond, will discuss in detail what work will be involved, and then decide what time the shomer needs to arrive. It is of course absolutely essential that no work is done until the mashgiach arrives! There are also general rules in operation. For example, no event preparation can normally commence until 30 minutes after the end of Shabbat on Saturday night.

Can you give advice on how to best arrange a shomered function for anyone who has not been through this process before?



Like anything else, the more planning and preparation the better! The first port of call should be Mrs. Sandra Richmond, the most experienced and knowledgeable secretary, who will provide a comprehensive list of essential information such as licensed kosher caterers, available dates (obviously no weddings are permitted during nearly all of the Omer, to give but one example), and approved locations.

It would probably be useful to discuss in detail event options with several kosher caterers. Usual conversation areas would include the menu, food presentation and display, and the style of overall event presentation. We have already mentioned that many Simcha hosts today also often utilise the services of event planners. However, the bottom line is that the relevant family members need to ultimately make their own minds up – both of us have shomered many simchas, but none are ever exactly the same. Lets us all hope, that with Hashem's direction and love, the Covid-19 virus will be defeated, and this will no longer be an academic question!



Genetic Engineering in Halacha DIY Shiur

Daniel Sacks

*During the Covid-19 pandemic, we have all had to adapt. This Do-It-Yourself shiur aims at providing discussion points and debating topics with sources and starting points. This can be used to create an interactive discussion amongst friends and family or merely to keep your mind thinking! It will be split up into three sections: **Questions**, **Sources**, and **Extra information / Discussion points**.*

All the source text has been taken from Sefaria, however please feel free to translate them yourself or use your own English copies of the sources if you need!

“Science takes things apart to see how they work. Religion puts things together to see what they mean.”

Rabbi Lord Jonathan Sacks

Significant scientific breakthroughs are constantly happening around us. With each new breakthrough, there comes a need to address its place in halacha and whether it can be applied to our everyday lives or whether it is something to be left alone. One such example of this is genetic engineering.

What is genetic engineering?

Can you think of any *examples* of genetic engineering?

How about any specific examples that could be especially *problematic* in halacha?

Is genetic engineering even *allowed* in halacha?!

Genetic Engineering is on a *microscopic* level. Is this *relevant*?

After that first round of questions, I hope you now have an idea of the type of things this shiur will be addressing! Science and Halacha can go hand in hand with careful deliberation and halachic consideration.

3,000,000,000 bases, 46 chromosomes, 20,000 genes

The base pairs could be seen to be the ‘letters’ of DNA and the genes can be seen to be the ‘words’.

With this initial discussion and very basic look into DNA, we can begin to jump into our sources and start discussing how genetic engineering might be limited or encouraged by halacha.

Pirkei Avot 5:22

Ben Bag Bag said: Turn it over, and [again] turn it over, for all is therein. And look into it; And become grey and old therein; And do not move away from it, for you have no better portion than it.

בן בג בג אומר, הפך בה והפך בה,
דכלא בה. ובה תחזי, וסיב ובלה בה,
וימנה לא תזוע, שאין לך מדה טובה
הימנה

We are being told to “look into it”. This is quite a cryptic Mishnah and isn’t immediately clear at first. We are seemingly being told to search and keep searching because “all is [in it]”.

What *exactly* is "it"?

What else could it *mean*?

"It" is interpreted as being Torah. We know the Torah contains everything there is and therefore, we would presumably assume that it also includes science? Hashem constructed the laws of nature and all that comes with it. The more we search, the more we find! Maybe gene editing is there for us to find and as a scientific advancement it is put there by Hashem to be discovered and utilised?! Whilst we can never truly understand Hashem's creation, science helps us to try and understand the basic level of how things work and represents what Hashem wants us to understand.

Bereishit Rabbah 1:10

Rabbi Yonah said in the name of Rabbi Levi: Why was the world created with a "bet"? Just as a bet is closed on all sides and open in the front, so you are not permitted to say, "What is beneath? What is above? What came before? What will come after?" Rather from the day the world was created and after

רבי יונה בשם רבי לוי אמר, למה נברא העולם ב'ב', אלא מה ב' זה סתום מכל צדדיו ופתוח מלפניו, כך אין לך רשות לומר, מה למטה, מה למעלה, מה לפני, מה לאחור, אלא מיום שברא העולם ולהבא

This previous source is directly referring to the beginning (i.e. the first word of the Torah, Bereishit). The question is why was a Bet used? Surely it should be an Aleph?! Our Sages say that the Aleph was saved by Hashem for special revelation (i.e. what we cannot access by learning and advancing, rather something only achievable by direct intervention through Hashem).

We seem to be told that investigating should happen, yet there is an inherent limit to it. We only have access to what Hashem allows us to have and we can search through that. So maybe we can say that if we have managed to discover it now, it is because this is the designated time that Hashem has picked for us to explore and discover this. If this is the case, then shouldn't we be all set to go?

Science is not necessarily measured by what we can do, rather what Hashem allows us to do.

Devarim 4:32

You have but to inquire about bygone ages that came before you, ever since G-d created man on earth, from one end of heaven to the other: has anything as grand as this ever happened, or has it's like ever been known?

כי שאלנא ליתים ראשנים אשר ה'ינו לפניך למן-היום אשר ברא אלקים אדם על הארץ ולמקצה השמים ועד קצה השמים הנהיה כדבר הגדול הזה או הנשמע כמהו

What does the Torah *mean* here?

Is there an *obligation* to advance our knowledge of the world to appreciate Hashem's creation?

Maybe this could be *reminding* us of our history and how Hashem created the world?

There seems to be a clear message of inquiry here. It could be suggesting quite a few different things here. This could be a reminder of our history or encouragement to keep investigating!

Maybe there is the obligation to know where we came from. But maybe if this is true, we may also have to try and understand our past.

Mishna Torah, Halacha regarding Murder and Preservation of life 11:4

So too, any obstruction that is a danger to life must be removed as a matter of positive duty and extremely necessary caution.

וְכֵן כָּל מְכַשֵּׁל שֵׁשׁ בּוֹ סִבְנַת נְפֻשׁוֹת מְצוּת
עֲשֵׂה לְהִסְרֹו וּלְהַשְׁמִיר מִמֶּנּוּ וּלְהִזְהַר בְּדַבַּר יִפְה
יִפְה

There is a clear obligation here from the Rambam to remove any danger to life. Genetic engineering can be used to remove hereditary disease and to do this would significantly improve the life of the baby born.

Would we be *allowed* to use genetic engineering to remove hereditary diseases?

Would this count as *removing* “any obstruction that is a danger to life”?

There is the obligation to build a fence around a roof to ensure nobody falls off. Whilst a fence may not entirely remove the possibility, we still must build it. This could mean that whilst genetic engineering may not work, it could be something we must investigate with the interest of preserving life.

After exploring Halacha of the Rambam, we will jump back into the Torah to see what else we can find.

Vayikra 19:19

You shall observe My laws. You shall not let your cattle mate with a different kind; you shall not sow your field with two kinds of seed; you shall not put on cloth from a mixture of two kinds of material.

אֶת־חֻקֹּתַי תִּשְׁמְרוּ בְהַמְתָּךְ לֹא־
תַרְבִּיעַ כְּלָאִים שָׂדֶךְ לֹא־תִזְרַע
כְּלָאִים וּבְגָד כְּלָאִים לֹא־שַׁעֲטָנָד לֹא־
יַעֲלֶה עָלֶיךָ

We have here, the source for ‘Kalayim’. These forbidden mixtures are specifically brought down by the Torah. The Ramban (Ramban on Leviticus 19:19:1) suggest a reason for this is that by mixing species one could be implying that Hashem’s work is not sufficient.

This discussion point adds on further questions to our understanding of this source.

Is genetic engineering a direct *violation* of ‘Kalayim’?

Maybe we could be trying to *interfere* with matters beyond our scope of understanding?

But if we are only adding or taking away, how can it even be argued *interbreeding* is taking place?

For our final source, we are going to explore a part of the Torah widely known and memorised.

Bereishit 2:3

And G-d blessed the seventh day and declared it holy, because on it G-d ceased from all the work of creation that He had done.

וַיְבָרֶךְ אֱלֹהִים אֶת־יוֹם הַשְּׁבִיעִי וַיְקַדְּשׁ אֹתוֹ כִּי
בּוֹ שָׁבַת מְקַלְמֵלָאֲתוֹ אֲשֶׁר־בְּרָא אֱלֹהִים
לַעֲשׂוֹת

This source can actually be read to say “And G-d blessed the seventh day and declared it holy, because on it G-d ceased from all the work of creation that He had *created to make.*”

This new way of reading the source presents a whole new way of understanding the text!

This can then be interpreted to mean that Hashem made the world and allows (maybe even encourages!) us to be creative and use our resources.

This final interpretation adds a whole new layer to the source for us to try and understand further. There are a few key take away questions from this and discussions with your Rabbi, family and friends should definitely be encouraged to try and unravel this!

Is genetic engineering *allowed* in Halacha?

How can we ensure we do not *overstep*?

Would there be specific *conditions* in which it could happen?



ט"סד

“How the lack of sleep can affect our prayers”

Wow!! What a privilege to have been able to stay up all night and watch the sun rise over our shining faces beaming from the Torah we have soaked in!! Do you remember from previous years that as we started praying, things became complicated? **Can I pray everything or do some parts of prayer demand sleep for it to be recited?** And now with everyone in their own home with no one to ask, things are even more dazzling, so join me on this journey through our prayers!

All blessings discussed are at the beginning of shacharis

WASHING HANDS

Every morning one is supposed to wash one's hands (3 times on each hand) and make the blessing of 'AL NETILAS YODAYIM'. Why? [There are 2 reasons and in each reason there are 2 opinions.]

1. FOR PRAYER - There are two opinions as to why prayer requires washing.

A – A person at night would most probably have touched covered parts of their body.

B – Like a Kohen prior to serving in the Temple would have to wash his hands in the 'kiyor' so too before serving G-D with prayer we wash our hands!

So lets see - if one didn't sleep do they need to wash?

Acc. to **A** – NO as they were awake and aware what they were doing and would not touch those parts.

Acc. to **B** – YES as they are praying and serving Hashem.

2. To remove a bad spirit that rests upon a person when one sleeps at night!

Again 2 opinions;

A – it comes from sleeping a 'proper sleep'.

B – it comes from the night (after the night has passed).

So therefore if one didn't sleep

A – NO they didn't sleep

B – YES as they passed over the night.

A proper sleep is;
1. atleast half hour
2. in a bed

Remember one is not allowed to make a blessing in

What should I do?

Of course one can wash their hands but making the blessing can only be said acc. to opinion **B**. However if one goes to be excused then everyone agrees the blessing can be said. (Usually, the blessing of 'al Netilas Yodayim' is not said after every time that one goes to the conveniences.)

NOTE: if one has slept 'a proper sleep' any time during the day before Shavuot then they can say the blessing acc. to both opinions as they have had the **night and slept!**

THE BLESSINGS ON THE TORAH

At the beginning of the morning prayers every day we make the blessings on the Torah! We thank G-D for giving us this special gift, for allowing us to study it and beg Him to make it sweet for us! **One should not study Torah before making these blessings.**

But why do we recite them every morning?

Opinion **A** – They are like other morning blessings that were established to say each morning at the start of the day.

B – Since one has slept a proper sleep, they may have been ‘masiach daas’ i.e. lost awareness from the blessing and therefore needs to recite them again.

So let's see - if one didn't sleep should they still make blessings;

A – YES it is the morning just like any other morning!

B – NO as they didn't sleep.

What should I do?

If one has slept ‘a proper sleep’ any time during the day before Shavuos, or if they sleep before praying, then they can say the blessing acc. to both opinions as it is the **morning** and they have **slept!**

If, however, one has not slept, then since there are 2 opinions whether to recite them, we should try and have someone who slept (a proper sleep) during the previous afternoon to say them for us!

But what if you don't have anyone to do that for you **especially in this situation?**

In the blessing of ‘Ahava Rabboh’ just before the Shema, one should have in mind to fulfil their obligation for the blessings of the Torah to cover them until one goes to sleep (and learn something small immediately after the Amida), and after one wakes up, they should make the blessings of the torah (Rabbi Kupperman Shlita).



ELOKAI NESHOMO AND HAMAVIR SHEINO

These 2 beautiful blessings praise G-D for waking us up in the morning!

Since the words discuss waking up, it is questionable for someone who has not slept to recite them;

Opinion **A** – **NO**, as they haven't slept in order to wake up

B – **YES** as the blessings are ‘plural’ thanking G-D for ‘waking people up’.

What should I do?

One should say them after one's morning sleep (up until midday – 1.04pm). They should wash their face first! [As there are still people sleeping when they go to sleep.]

If you are not planning on going to sleep in the morning, you can still say ‘Hamavir Sheino’ if you have slept during the previous day.



THE MORNING BLESSINGS

(e.g. 'shelo osani' etc. besides the long 'hamavir sheino' which is explained above)

All those morning blessings **can be said as normal** [they are supposed to be recited every morning].



TZITZIS

The commandment of wearing Tzitzis on any 4 cornered garments is only during the day and not at night. There are 2 opinions

A – This means literally during the day and not at night

B – It's to do with our clothes. Clothes that are for the day would require Tzitzis, but ones that we wear at night e.g. pyjamas are exempt!

*So let's see - if one didn't sleep **and wore his Tzitzis all night** can he make a new blessing?*

A – **YES** although he wore it during the night he had no obligation to so, therefore in the morning there is a new obligation and new blessing

B – **NO** since he was wearing his day garment the whole time there is no new obligation and no new blessing.

What should I do?

Make the blessing on one's tallit which he has not been wearing all night, and have in mind that the blessing on the tallit should also cover the Tzitzis. If one doesn't have a tallit then ask someone who does to make blessing.

QUESTION TO THINK ABOUT – if one sleeps on an aeroplane in economy class is that called a 'proper sleep'?



If that was complicated try this one;

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
I slept on erev Shavuot:	Go to the toilet	Wash 6 times	Say the blessings of 'AL NETILAS YODAYIM' and 'Asher yotzar'	Say the blessings on the torah	Put tallis on and have in mind also for Ttitzis	Say the morning blessings but NOT 'Hamavir sheino'	Say 'Elokai Neshomo' and 'Hamavir Sheino' after morning sleep b4 midday
I did not sleep on erev Shavuot:	Go to the toilet	Wash 6 times	Say the blessings of 'AL NETILAS YODAYIM' and 'Asher yotzar'	Look above for info	Put tallis on and have in mind also for Ttitzis	Say the morning blessings but NOT 'Hamavir sheino'	Say 'Elokai Neshomo' and 'Hamavir Sheino' after morning sleep b4 midday
Page in the 'green' siddur	—	—	12	14	6	16	16 & 20

Have a wonderful and inspiring Shavuot!

Yaakov Kohn

P.S. All halachot (Laws) mentioned are from the Mishna Berura, Rabbi Kupperman, Chukai Chaim and Machze Eliyohu.

First Day of Shavuot, Friday, May 29

Even if you don't have a special Machzor for Shavuot, you can easily follow the order of the Prayers for the 1st day of Shavuot from Rabbi Sacks' Siddur:

- If you wear Tallit, the blessing on Tallit, p.6
- Morning service, pp. 12- 32 (important; if you didn't sleep the whole night skip the 2nd paragraph on p. 16, and the 1st paragraph on page 20 – these are blessings for waking up after sleeping, so you cannot say them. For more info see the article written by Rabbi Kohn.)
- Morning service for Shabbat and Festivals pp. 326 – 388 (skip Kaddish and Barchu on p.370 but DO say Baruch Ata etc. – the last two lines on this page, then on page 372 read only the first paragraph and turn to Titbarach on page 378).
- Amidah for the Festivals, pp. 646-660
- Full Hallel, pp 618 – 628.
- Not having the Torah Scroll, we omit all the prayers that we recite when we bring the Torah scrolls out and when we bring them back, pp. 404 – 432.

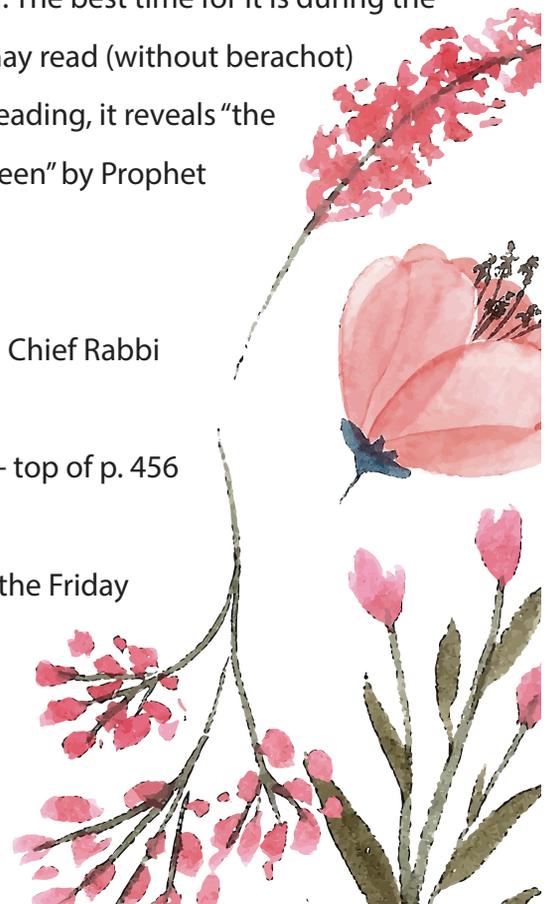
If you pray at the early hours try to pace the recitation of the prayer so that you will start the Amidah for the Festivals exactly at sunrise – 4.45 am; this is the choicest time to recite it! If you pray during the later hours, bear in mind that the latest time to recite the morning Shema is 8.54 am, and the latest time to recite the Shacharit Amidah is 10.17 am.

In the absence of Torah Scroll, it's still appropriate to read, albeit without reciting the berachot, the Torah reading for the 1st day of Shavuot from your Machzor or Chumash – it tells us the awe-inspiring story of the very first Shavuot when G-d gave us His Torah! [Exodus 19;1 - 20;23]. The best time for it is during the usual slot of the leining i.e. after Shacharit & Hallel, before Musaf. You may read (without berachot) the Prophets- Haphtarah as well; no less awe-inspiring than the Torah reading, it reveals "the Chariot of Ezekiel", the mystical vision of the Heavenly Court as it was "seen" by Prophet Ezekiel [Ezekiel, entire chapter 1 followed with verse 3 in chapter 12].

Prayers after the Reading of Torah and Prophets:

- Additional Service for the Festivals - Musaf for Shavuot, p. 670 in Chief Rabbi Sacks' Siddur
- Additional Service for Shabbat & Festivals, the bottom of p. 450 - top of p. 456
- Levites' hymn for Friday, p.152 2nd paragraph.

Very short Kiddush (p 730) and relaxed meal; don't overdo it- you have the Friday Night- Second Yom Tov Night meal to look forward! While reciting the Grace After Meal – Birkat Hamazon, don't forget to include the special insertion for the Festivals - Ya'aleh Ve'Yavo, making appropriate reference to the Festival of Shavuot



The Laws of preparation of food and lighting candles for the Second Day of Yom Tov and Shabbat.

Please bear in mind that while lighting the Yom Tov candles or preparing food on Yom Tov one should be extra careful not to do anything that is forbidden on Yom Tov; especially, not turning on and off the fire and/or electrical appliances.

When cooking on Yom Tov it is forbidden to turn on electrical appliances, using a hob lighter and turning the fire off after using it! The only permissible way to cook on Yom Tov is by leaving the fires or the electric elements, that you are planning to use, turned on from before the commencement of Yom Tov on Thursday the 28th at 9.04 pm until the termination of Shabbat on Saturday the 30th at 10.34 pm. For this reason, it is impossible to use a microwave oven or induction stove on Yom Tov because they cannot stay on throughout the entire Yom Tov. (I love my induction stove, but for Yom Tov I have no choice but to use a small tabletop electric cooker)

It is also forbidden to strike a match or a lighter on Yom Tov. To light the Yom Tov candles you have to light a match from a pre-existing flame (a yearzeit candle or a pilot light) that has been lit before the First Night of Yom Tov.

When the match ignites use it to ignite the Yom Tov candles (if it goes off before you ignited all the candles, start again with another match). After lighting the candles place the match you used to light the candles in an ashtray without putting it off. If you don't have an existing fire at home, don't light the candles for the Second Yom Tov and Shabbat!

The afternoon is the time to recite Mincha for Yom Tov, (pp. 476- 480 and then pp. 646- 660 in Rabbi Sacks' Siddur). In order to be able to recite Maariv tonight earlier than on the previous evening, make sure to conclude recitation of Mincha before 7.40 pm.

The Second Night of Shavuot and Shabbat, Friday, May 29, 7.45 pm

All the preparations for Shabbat, including lighting the Shabbat candles, cooking, putting the food on Shabbat-hotplate etc. must be completed before 7.45 pm.!!!

As it is both Yom Tov and Shabbat the blessing recited before lighting the candles includes them both; Baruch atah Adonai Eloheinu melech ha'olam, asher kid'shanu b'mitzvotav v'tzivanu lehadlik ner shel Shabbat ve'Yom Tov. - Blessed are you, L-rd our G-d, king of the universe, who has sanctified us with his commandments, and commanded us to light the lights of Shabbat and Yom Tov

The 2nd blessing – Shehechyanu is the same as the first night.



Before Maariv - Mizmor shir le'Yom Ha'Shabbat (starting at the bottom of p. 270 finishing before Kaddish on p.272). Maariv for Shabbat and Festivals (Rabbi Sacks' Siddur pp. 274- 282 & 646-660). The Amidah on pp. 646-660 includes a number of inserts (all in brackets) that have to be added on Shabbat; be mindful not to miss any of these inserts as they constitute the Shabbat part of the prayer.

Conclude Maariv with VaYechulu HaShamayim – 2nd paragraph on p. 294, and Alenu Leshabeach – second half of p. 302.

Kiddush for Festival Evenings (Rabbi Sacks' Siddur p. 660) is similar to the First Night, including reciting the She'he'che'yanu blessing, except for the parts that have to be added on Shabbat; again, be mindful not to miss all these parts as they constitute the Shabbat aspect of the Kiddush.

While reciting the Grace After Meal – Birkat Hamazon, don't forget to include the special insertion For Shabbat – Retze VeHachlitzenu, as well as for the Festivals - Ya'aleh Ve'Yavo, making appropriate reference to the Festival of Shavuot

To fulfil the Mitzvah of reciting Shema at night-time, all the three paragraphs of Shema, p. 276-278, have to be recited again tonight after 10.14 pm.

The Second Day of Shavuot and Shabbat, Saturday, May 30.

The morning service is generally similar to the First Day. Please find below the list of differences; everything that is not listed is recited exactly as on the First Day:

- The latest time to recite the morning Shema is 8.53 am; the latest time to recite the Shacharit Amidah remains 10.17 am.
- When you come to page 372 skip the first paragraph and then continue reading without omissions.
- While reciting the Amidah for the Festivals, pp. 646-660, be mindful not to miss any of the special Shabbat inserts as they constitute the Shabbat part of the prayer.
- As it is the second day of Shavuot, we recite the Megilla of Rus.



Is Ruth Still Relevant in 2020?

Rabbi Yossi Dansky (Leeds Kollel)

One of the time-honoured customs associated with the Festival of Shavuot is reading the book of Ruth. There are many reasons offered for this custom, including;

- The book of Ruth tells the story of Ruth`s conversion and acceptance of Torah and Mitzvot, something which the entire Jewish people did on Shavuot.
- The events described in the book of Ruth take place around the harvest time, which is the time of year Shavuot falls.
- Ruth was the ancestress of King David, who was both born and passed away on Shavuot.

I would like to share with you what I believe to be an incredibly meaningful link between the Story of Ruth, Shavuot and the time we currently find ourselves in today.

The giving of the Torah, which took place on Shavuot, was the ultimate act of kindness from Hashem, for by giving us the 613 mitzvot, He was providing us with 613 opportunities to come close to Him and close to each other. Our Rabbis tell us that the book of Ruth was composed to grant us an appreciation of the trait of kindness. However, Ruth`s story is far from glamorous, it begins with calamity and is followed by hardship after hardship. Yes, it has a good ending but are we supposed to just ignore all the suffering in the beginning?

All the wonderful things Ruth merited - to enter into the Jewish people, to marry Boaz the leader of the generation, to be the progenitor of King David, and ultimately, the Mashiach - were a result of the superhuman kindness which she performed for her mother in law Naomi during their time of calamity! With her husband dead, she had no financial and social prospects should she choose to go with Naomi, whereas all the comforts of (her royal) home were waiting for her should she choose to return to Moav.

In this terrible situation, Ruth`s decision to stay with Naomi drew on resources of kindness that never would have been accessed or realized during “normal” times. It is not always in our hands to determine the things that will happen to us. It is also not within our grasp to understand why Heaven ordains different experiences and circumstances for different individuals. What is in our hands, however, is how we respond to those experiences. For someone whose only goal in life is to be comfortable, any uncomfortable situation is by definition negative. In contrast, for someone or whom life is about becoming the best person they can be, sometimes such greatness is achieved specifically through overcoming adversity. This is the legacy of Ruth.

Furthermore, the Midrash expounds on the name Ruth, saying:

What is the meaning of the name Ruth? For she saw the matters of her mother-in-law Naomi. In light of what we have said, that Ruth represents an embodiment of the trait of kindness, it is interesting that her name should be associated with the concept of “seeing”, for is kindness not rather something that relates to acts that one “does”?



What we see from here, is that while kindness ultimately takes the form of actions, its essence lies in the faculty of sight. Sometimes we are so wrapped up with our own needs and affairs that we simply do not “see” or notice that someone nearby is in need of kindness. In truth many of life’s opportunities for great deeds start out in the corner of our eye. It is up to us whether we choose to face them, bringing them into sharp focus.

There is no more poignant example of this than the events of the book of Ruth. Ruth had been through her own tragedy with the death of her husband and could easily have become focused solely on her own misfortune and needs. Add to this the fact that Naomi explicitly told her that she did not want her help and we could readily understand if Ruth returned home with a clear conscience. Had this happened, the greatness of Ruth’s kindness would never have been actualized. There was one thing which did not allow Ruth to leave - she “saw” Naomi.

We first observe this crucial quality with our greatest leader Moshe. The verse reads:

“ויגדל משה ויצא אל אחיו וירא בסבלותם”

“...Moshe grew up and went out to his brethren and saw their burdens.”

The critical decision for Moshe was not whether or not to help, but whether or not to see. To then offer to help them was a natural product of his decision to admit them into his field of vision. Moshe was the first leader of the Jewish nation. If the ability to see the needs of others is of immense value to the individual, for a leader it is absolutely crucial. There is no one for whom it is easier “not to see” than for a leader. The institution of leadership has its own maintenance which can very easily become the sole focus of the leader. Hence, the quality of “seeing others” is all the more important. Ruth the “mother of royalty” imbued within her great grandson King David qualities that successful monarchy requires.

This quality is highlighted when the Prophet Shmuel went to anoint David as king. The verse there describes him as, “יפה עינים וטוב רואי” “Fair eyes and a pleasant appearance”

Although the phrase, “וטוב רואי” is generally taken as a reference to David’s appearance, it is worthwhile noting that the verse does not use the more common expression “יפה מראה”.

Perhaps it is possible to look at the words “וטוב רואי” as literally saying that David was someone who saw well! As we have seen, this quality would be crucial for his role as king and thus we see special mention in the words which introduce him as the future king.

As we enter the third month of lockdown, the challenges are ongoing. Be it sickness, or G-d forbid loss of life or other difficulties such as home schooling, loneliness, boredom, loss of income, too much work or too little. No one could be faulted for falling into despair and self-pity however we are in fact seeing incredible acts of kindness, consideration and care. From all denominations, people are opening their eyes to truly see the needs of each other and responding accordingly.

May all this incredible kindness find favour in Hashem’s eyes and bring the end to all the suffering by bringing the final redemption speedily in our days. Have a good Yom Tov.



- Today's Torah reading is Deuteronomy, 14;22 – 16;17. The Haphtarah is Habakkuk, 2;20 – 3;19.

After the Reading of Torah and Prophets:

Today, before Musaf, we recite the memorial prayer - Yizkor. It can be found in any Machzor, or on page 666 in Rabbi Sacks' Siddur. One can recite it for their parents, grandparents and other relatives and friends. If you know the Hebrew name of the deceased and the Hebrew name of their father use it in the prayer; if not, just use the names that you know – G-d will understand. At the time of the prayer it is very important to pledge to do something meritorious for the soul of the deceased; to donate to a charity of your choice, to volunteer for an important cause, or to engage in a study of Torah (learning the foundationbook of the Talmud – Mishnah is considered the most meritorious study for the soul.)

- When reciting the Additional Service for the Festivals - Musaf for Shavuot, p. 670 in Rabbi Sacks' Siddur, be mindful not to miss any of the special Shabbat inserts as they constitute the Shabbat part of the prayer.
- Conclude with Levites' hymn for Shabbat, p.152, last paragraph.
- Before the Shabbat & Festival meal, the Day Kiddush for festivals (p 730) starts on the top of the page with the special Shabbat paragraph.

While reciting the Grace After Meal – Birkat Hamazon, don't forget to include the special insertion For Shabbat – Retze VeHachlitzenu, as well as for the Festivals - Ya'aleh Ve'Yavo, making appropriate reference to the Festival of Shavuot

The afternoon is the time to recite Mincha for Shabbat and Yom Tov, (pp. 476- 480 and then pp. 646- 660 in Rabbi Sacks' Siddur). Again, be mindful not to miss any of the special Shabbat inserts as they constitute the Shabbat part of the prayer.

As today is Shabbat, one should have a light meal with Hamotzi – Seuda Shelishit, before the conclusion of Shabbat; this meal should start before sunset at 9.24 pm. While reciting the Grace After Meal – Birkat Hamazon, don't forget to include the special insertion For Shabbat – Retze VeHachlitzenu, as well as for the Festivals - Ya'aleh Ve'Yavo, making a ppropriate reference to the Festival of Shavuot.

Shabbat and the Festival of Shavuot terminate at 10.34 pm. First, we recite Maariv, pp. 202 – 230 in Chief Rabbi's Siddur (remember to say Ata Chonantanu on p. 216). Reluctantly, we allow Shabbat and Shavuot to depart marking their departure with Havdalah service, from the last paragraph on p. 608 till the end of p. 610.

Chag Sameach & Shabbat Shalom

