

A GUIDE FOR SHABBAT FOLLOWED BY SHAVUOT

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SEUDAT SHLISHTT

This year the Holiday of Shavuot begins immediately after Shabbat, thereby raising certain questions due to this unique circumstance.

Recommended to partake in Seudat Shlishit (third meal) on this Shabbat, at an earlier hour so as not to affect our appetite for the Chag. Therefore, best to eat before last three hours of Shabbat. Some prefer to move up the meal to immediately after midday (approx. 1 or 2 o'clock in afternoon).

If one eats at his regular time Shabbat

afternoon, then one should make sure to leave an appetite for Chag evening meal.

PREPARING FOR CHAG

One needs to abstain from any acts of preparation from Shabbat to Chag.

One may clean the Shabbat table as one usually does, in order to allow it to appear clean and tidy for Shabbat.

One should refrain from washing dishes on Shabbat if the only purpose is to use them for the Chag and not on Shabbat.

One should wait until Chag begins and Shabbat concludes before placing any food on a hotplate for use on Chag.





CANDLE LIGHTING

Candle lighting for Chag may only commence after nightfall (Tzeit HaKochavim).

After Nightfall, before the candle lighting, one recites the phrase “Baruch Ha’maavdil ben Kodesh L’Kodesh. Only then, may one light the candles for the Chag. The brachot of l’hadlik ner shel Yom tov and shehechyanu are recited.

One should prepare a lit Yahrzeit candle before Shabbat to allow a flame to be transferred for the lighting candles of Chag. One is prohibited in lighting a new flame on Chag with a match.

Recommended to use 48-hour Yahrzeit candle to ensure that the flame remains lit until after Shabbat.



HAVDALA

Chag that begins immediately after the Shabbat, we refrain from the normal Havdala ceremony that we are accustomed

to. Rather, within the Kiddush for the Chag, parts of the Havdala service are incorporated. No

spices are used since we are still amid the happiness of the Chag. The order of the Kiddush for the evening welcoming

Shavuot is firstly, the blessing on the wine, the text of the kiddush, the blessing over the existing candles that were lit for the Chag (without the need to intertwine two wicks), and finally the Shehechyanu blessing.

Shabbat Shalom and Chag Sameach

ADDITIONAL MINHAGIM AND GUIDELINES FOR SHAVUOT

A. It is customary to decorate the Shul and home with greenery and flowers for Shavuot.

B. There is customary to eat dairy foods.

C. There is custom to remain awake and study Torah on the night of Shavuot. For those who follow this practice, there are a number of points to bear in mind if one has not slept at all:

The blessing of *Al Netilat Yadayim* and *Asher Yatzar* may be said only after going to the bathroom.

The following blessings should not be said: a. *Al mitzvat tzitzit* b. the blessings on Torah study c. *Elokai neshama* and *Ha'maavir sheina*.

If possible, one should hear someone else (who has slept during the night) say them and intend to fulfill his obligation by listening to the recitation of the blessings.

(The individual who is saying the blessings must also have in mind to allow the listeners to fulfill their obligation through his recitation).

If there is no one to recite these blessings, then the blessing for the *talit gadol* can be used to cover the *talit katan* as well, and the blessing of *Ahava raba* can cover the blessings for Torah study if one specifically has so in mind and if immediately upon termination of the Amida one recites some Torah passages.



MEGILAT RUTH AND TORAH READING FOR SHAVUOT

Many communities read Megilat Ruth on Shavuot morning before Torah reading. (Outside of Israel it is read on the second day.)

Some communities read it in the afternoon (before Mincha).

A recent trend in Vatikín (pre-sunrise) minyanim (in Israel) is to read it before davening. While some feel that it is not ideal to do so, it has become a popular practice because of the time saved for people who are quite tired and appreciate the early morning davening.

When read from a kosher megila (Minhag Yerushalayim), the reading is preceded by the brachot... Al Mikra Megila and Shehechyanu. Read from a book, no brachot are recited.

Various reasons combine to make Ruth a perfect reading for Shavuot:

The text itself tells us that its

story takes place at the time of the "cutting of the wheat". Shavuot is Chag HaKatzir.

One of the major purposes of the book of Ruth is to show us the lineage of David HaMelech and the Davidic line. Tradition tells us that David HaMelech died (and was born) on Shavuot.

Perhaps more significantly, the story of Ruth is the inspiring story of Kabbalat HaTorah on an individual level, just as Shavuot is the commemoration of Kabbalat HaTorah on a national level. All of Israel were like converts at Sinai. This matches nicely that the Torah reading comes from Parshat Yitro, another example of personal



Kabbalat HaTorah.

Ruth is the story of Chesed, acts of kindness. The Torah begins and ends with G-d's acts of kindness—clothing Adam and Chava on the one side and burying Moshe on the other.

We recite *Akdamut* on Shavuot morning, after the Kohen is called to the Torah, before his bracha and before the reading begins, it is the Ashkenazi custom to responsively recite a 90-line poem praising G-d, His Torah and His people. Written by Rabbi Meir of Worms (one of Rashi's teachers) it conveys the spirit of love of G-d and Judaism even under the adverse conditions of the Crusades. Rabbi Meir's son was killed by Crusaders and he himself died soon after a "forced debate" with Christian clergy of his town. The poem celebrates Torah. Each line of Akdamut ends with a syllable TA, TAV-ALEF, last and first letters of the Alef Bet, some see this as a reminder of the nature of the Torah itself - as soon as we complete reading or learning the Torah, we immediately begin it again.

Sfardim do not read Akdamut, but they have the custom of

reading a poem called the Ketuba composed by Rabbi Yosef Najara, celebrating the marriage, so to speak, of G-d and Bnei Yisrael, or the Torah and Bnei Yisrael. They read the Ketuba when the Ark is opened, before the Torahs are taken out.

Torah Reading from the first of two Torahs on Shavuot, we read from Parshat Yitro, the account of Ma'amad Har Sinai and Matan Torah, from Shmot 19 & 20 a total of 48 psukim. The reading is divided among 5 Aliyot, as on all Yom Tov days (that don't fall on Shabbat – which Shavuot never does).

The reading begins with the famous pasuk: "In the third month from the Exodus, on this day, they (Bnei Yisrael) came to Midbar Sinai." Rashi's two comments on "this day" are:

1. It was Rosh Chodesh Sivan that the People arrived at Sinai, and

2. The Torah uses the term this day (Bayom Hazeh) rather than (Bayom Hahu) to teach us that Matan Torah should not be thought of as a "once upon a time, a long time ago" experience, but

rather "words of Torah should be fresh in our eyes as if we received them today."

This is such an important concept that it bears constant repeating, attention, and effort to internalize. Especially when there are so many detractors who proclaim the Torah and its Mitzvot as antiquated, outdated, and irrelevant, we must be enthusiastic proponents of the opposite view. Etz Chayim Hi.

Could the Torah's being described as a living tree also contribute towards the custom of adorning the shul and home with tree branches?

The second pasuk is no less famous. "Vayichan sham Yisrael..." Israel, as one being with one heart and a singular purpose, camped opposite the mount. The unparalleled experience of Jewish Unity that gave standing at the foot of Mt. Sinai its everlasting significance, become one of our special goals of Jewish life.

This explains the dayeinu couplet: Had You brought us to Har Sinai and not given us the Torah, we would still have reason to thank You.

Aseret Hadibrot is read in the "upper notes", Taamei Elyon, even according to Minhag Yerushalayim (which uses Taamei Hatachton for Parshat Yitro and Vaetchanan.) Taamei Elyon presents the text as separate commandments – with fanfare and flair-rather than psukim-like all the Torah- which is the way we hear it with Taamei Tachton.

Maftir (in the second Torah) is the Musaf of Shavuot from Parshat Pinchas (Bamidbar 28:26-31).

Haftara is Yechezkel's first chapter and his most vivid and esoteric vision. The level and type of prophecy attained by the Jews at Sinai has been compared to the visions of Yechezkel.



A SHORT VORT

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“And he shall blot “it” out with the bitter water (5:23)
ומחה אל מי המרים

As part of this mystical ceremony of the “Sotah” the verses of the curses from the Torah are inscribed on a scroll, including G-d’s name, and erased in the bitter waters.

The known question is asked. How can the Torah allow for the erasing of the name of G-d, seemingly such a reprehensible offence?

The great Maharal from Prague (Rabbi Judah Loew 1520-1609) answers that the reason that erasing G-d’s name is sanctioned because there is the hope that this will allay any suspicions the husband may have of his wife. There is the chance that peace will be restored between this couple and the presence of G-d will continue to remain in this marriage. The goal of this erasure is not to belittle or eradicate G-d’s name but rather the opposite, an attempt of ensuring that G-d’s presence continues to dwell in this family. The Talmud in Shabbat 10b emphasis this idea by stating that “Peace” or “Shalom” is actually one of G-d’s name, very befitting for this very act. Shabbat Shalom


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