

# Day-by-Day Halachic Guide

Detailed instructions on the  
laws and customs for the  
Festival of Shavuos 5776  
Year of Hakhel

150th Anniversary  
of the Tzemach Tzedek's Histalkus

From the Badatz of Crown Heights

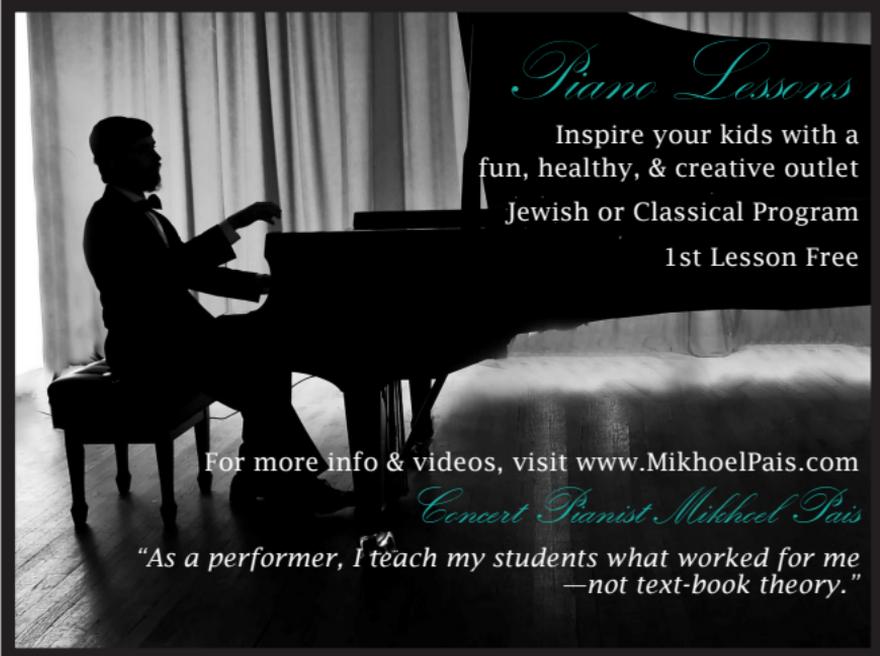
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והכלה רבקה שתחי' בנימיני  
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150th Anniversary  
of the Tzemach Tzedek’s Histalkus

Distilled from a series  
of public shiurim delivered by  
**Horav Yosef Yeshaya Braun,**  
Member of the Badatz of Crown Heights

#### 4 | Day-by-Day Halachic Guide Shavuos 5776, Hakhel

The basic laws and customs presented below are derived from multiple sources. Due to a dearth of space and time they are presented without their references and halachic notes. Primary sources include: *Shulchan Aruch* and commentaries, *Sefer HaMinhagim Chabad*, *Lu'ach Colel Chabad*, *Sichos* and *Igros Kodesh*. The intention of this summary is to inform you of some of the relevant laws, not to replace each person's obligation to review the Halachos comprehensively. **Please note:** Specific laws are mentioned only the first time that they become relevant, although they may apply to subsequent dates as well.

**Hakhel:** Once every seven years, on the second day of Sukkos immediately following the conclusion of a shmitah year, the entire nation – men, women, and children – would gather at the beis hamikdash and hear the king read aloud from the Torah. The incredible setting was compared to the receiving of the Torah on Mount Sinai and inspired all present with commitment, love, and awe of Hashem. This mitzvah is known as Hakhel, “assembly” of the Jewish nation.

The Rebbe calls attention to the concept of Hakhel to an extraordinary degree and with increasing intensity, to the point that his *sichos* and letters are filled with Hakhel-related directives. Hakhel is not limited to Sukkos. It remains a timely and urgent concept throughout a Hakhel year. We are expected to raise awareness of Hakhel at every possible opportunity and in every possible way, to draw associations between all our activities and the “call of the hour” – Hakhel. Leading by example, the Rebbe went to unusual lengths to draw such associations in his many *sichos*.

“All aspects of divine service performed in the course of the year must travel through the gateway – and are carried through with the spirit of – *hakhel*.” (*Sichas Shabbos Bereishis* 5748)

During Simchas Torah 5748, the Rebbe called for a Hakhel, assembly, of literature on Hakhel, meaning that information from all relevant Torah sources on

the concept of Hakhel should be published in a single volume. It was to include teachings from *nigleh* and especially from the inner dimensions of Torah, primarily as those teachings are explained in *Chassidus*. The goal of the volume would be identical to the goal of an actual Hakhel experience: to inspire the people to greater fear and awe of Hashem.

On Shabbos *Mishpatim* 5741, the Rebbe called for studying the “laws of Hakhel.” It is an obligation to study the laws of each festival every year thirty days in advance of the actual festival. We should similarly study the spiritual laws of Hakhel as they are recorded in the Torah teachings of *Mussar*, *Chassidus*, and *Kabbalah*.

This year is a Hakhel year. It is not the purpose of this publication, nor is it within its scope, to record all the relevant information on Hakhel, but we have made an effort to include snippets of relevant material wherever appropriate, culled from *sichos* that the Rebbe delivered at *farbrengens* in 770 – or, to borrow a phrase from the laws of Hakhel, that “the king would read ... at a wooden podium in the courtyard of the *beis hamikdash*.” This is no exchange for the need to study the topic from the original sources. The Rebbe’s *sichos* and letters on the matter are incredibly extensive.

For more on Hakhel, see Kovetz Hakhel published by *Vaad Lehafatzas Sichos* in 5755; *Kahal Gadol (Otzeros Mitzvas Hakhel)*, republished this year by *Mamash*; *Encyclopedia Talmudis*, entry “**Hakhel**”; *Hakhel (Kovetz leMitzvas Hakhel u’Birurei Hilchosehah)*, authored by Rabbi Eliyahu Dovid Rabinowitz-Teomim in Yerushalayim, published in 5706 and 5733; *Sefer Hakel (Mitzvas Hakhel – Asufas M’amarim)*, published by *Machon HaTorah ve’HaAretz* in 5761.

\* \* \*

This guide incorporates several reminders about laws that will only be applicable during the Era of Redemption, with the hope that Moshiach will come speedily, allowing us to implement these laws in practice. The concept of

studying these *halachos* is based on several *sichos*, some of which are quoted below:

“Hashem **begs** the Jewish people,” the Rebbe passionately stated, “to occupy themselves with the study of the laws of the sacrificial orders ... which [as our Sages state,] is considered as if we had actually offered the sacrifices. This study will bring about the actual offerings because it brings [to quote the Rambam,] ‘King Moshiach [who] will build the *beis hamikdash* ... and restore the laws of the Torah ... so that the Jewish people will again offer the sacrifices ... in accordance with all the *mitzvos* that are stated in the Torah,’ speedily, in our time – literally! [Then, to quote the festival liturgy,] ‘We will offer before You there the offerings of our obligations ... in accordance with the commandments of Your will.’” (*Likkutei Sichos*, vol. 18, p. 341 – *Emphasis in original.*)

“We must experience greater longing and yearning for the Redemption,” the Rebbe demanded. “One of the ways this is accomplished is through studying more Torah on the subjects of the Redemption and the *beis hamikdash*. Studying these topics greatly hastens their actual realization, to the extent that we will go directly from studying these subjects to greet our righteous Moshiach. We will inform him, ‘We have just completed studying the laws associated with your coming!’ An additional motivation to study these laws is that we must expect Moshiach’s arrival each and every day. In that case, these laws [concerning the Redemption and the *beis hamikdash*] are matters that every Jew – men and women alike – must know, in order to put them into practical use on a daily basis, such as many of the laws of the offerings.” (*From a Sichah addressed to N’shei u’B’nos Chabad – Sefer HaSichos 5750*, vol. 2, p. 485)

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**General Note:** the times listed below are for Crown Heights only. Since one can never achieve complete precision, and many factors may influence the accuracy of these times, it is recommended to begin earlier than the time listed and not wait until the last minute (e.g., for the start of Shabbos), or to wait extra time, when that is the appropriate precaution (e.g., the close of Shabbos).

## Before Shavuos

**One who traveled across** the International Date Line during *sefirah* should ask a *Rav*—as early as possible—how and when to celebrate Shavuos.

**We do not say *tachanun*,** nor do we fast from *Rosh Chodesh Sivan* until the twelfth of *Sivan*. The exception to this rule is a groom on his wedding day. Rather than reciting *tachanun* on the days following Shavuos, we yearn and expect each day that Moshiach will arrive and we will offer the festive sacrifices (*shalmei simchah* and *shalmei chagigah*) that we were unable to offer on Shavuos. On a Shabbos that occurs during this period, we omit *Av harachamim* and *Tzidkasecha tzedek*.

**In the days preceding Shavuos,** we should prepare ourselves in all the ways the Jews originally prepared themselves for *Matan Torah*. The Rebbe infers this directive from the detailed citation of the Alter Rebbe in *Orach Chayim* 494: “From *Rosh Chodesh Sivan* Moshe began preparing the Jews for *Matan Torah*...” (see *Likkutei Sichos*, vol. 38, p. 6).

We best prepare ourselves for receiving the Torah by increasing in our diligence in studying Torah. The Rebbe Rayatz penned a letter in the year 5700, instructing the *yeshivos* to establish a *seder* of learning on Shavuos. On Shavuos 5710, the Rebbe called for learning and publicizing this letter.

**Hakhel:** The Rebbe frequently explained the association between *hakhel* and the Giving of the Torah: the entire purpose of *hakhel* is to periodically relive the Giving of the Torah at Mount Sinai. This matter is treated at length in *Likkutei Sichos*, vol. 34, p. 189 *ff.* and in numerous other *sichos*.

“*Hakhel* is not only something to achieve in one’s personal divine service,” the Rebbe stated on Shabbos Parshas Naso in the year 5748, “but also in conjunction with others, and even the entire Jewish people! *Hakhel* requires us to assemble and unite all Jews in the study of Torah – as per the theme of the *mitzvah* of *hakhel* in its most literal sense, and as per original *hakhel* of all times, the **Giving of the Torah**, [as Moshe Rabbeinu described the event and its purpose:] ‘...*the day you stood before Hashem your G-d at Choreiv, when Hashem said to me: Assemble the people for Me, and I will let them hear My words, that they may learn to fear Me all the days,*’ etc. (*Devarim* 4:10). The event at Sinai is referred to as *yom hakahal*, ‘the Day of the Assembly,’ when the entire Jewish nation assembled. Not only did all of that generation assemble around Sinai, but also the souls of all Jews who would live in all future generations!”

***Kabolas ha-torah be-simchah u'bepnimitus!*** The Rebbe encourages all Jews to wish one another to receive the Torah on Shavuos with joy and *p'nimitus*, using the precise terminology of the Rebbe Rayatz. The Rebbe adds that wishing this to others brings additional blessing to the one extending the blessing as well.

**Haircuts:** The Rebbe Rashab showed displeasure with those who cut their hair earlier than *erev Shavuos*. This is a stringency based on Kabbalah and is not necessarily for reasons associated with mourning. (See Friday, 4 Sivan)

In earlier years, the Rebbe wouldn’t permit weddings before Shavuos. In later years, however, he approved of weddings taking place during the three days prior to Shavuos.

**Music is permitted** on the three days prior to Shavuos. However, this is restricted to weddings and is not a license for personal musical entertainment. The Chabad custom is to continue the mourning restrictions that apply throughout the *sefirah* until *erev Shavuos*. (A parallel to this is the musical *Lag Ba’omer* celebrations that are continued into the following night, although the mourning restrictions including a ban on personal musical enjoyment remain in full force.)

**One must be happy and cheerful on the festival of Shavuos**, and must also bring joy to his wife and children and all his dependents. This is a biblical obligation (*d'oraisa*). How is this accomplished? A husband can buy clothing or jewelry for his wife and nosh for his children before *Yom Tov* or at least *chassidische* nosh.... The Rebbe once commented regarding Pesach that a picture *haggadah* for children can be considered *chassidische* nosh.

## Friday, Erev Shabbos, 4 Sivan

**It is a *mitzvah* to have one's hair cut** before every *yom tov*, so as not to enter into *yom tov* unkempt. (*Shulchan Aruch Admur HaZaken* 529.) The prohibition of haircutting on *chol hamoed* was instituted especially to compel people to receive a haircut prior to *yom tov* and not to postpone it.”

The necessity of receiving a haircut on *erev Shavuos* is more acute, because haircutting was prohibited throughout the *sefirah*. The long hair accumulated over the *sefirah* makes one appear disheveled, which is highly inappropriate for any *yom tov*.

*Minhag Chabad* is to take a haircut **only** on *erev Shavuos*. However, since *erev Shavuos* coincides with Shabbos this year, we must cut our hair one day earlier, on *erev Shabbos*. (*Avodas HaKodesh (Chidah); Minchas Elazar.*) See *Kovetz* of Rabbi Dvorkin (p. 61): “It is obvious to me for a number of reasons that [when *erev Shavuos* coincides with Shabbos,] one should receive a haircut on *erev Shabbos*. In fact, I did so myself. And just as the barber began to cut my hair, his telephone rang – it was Rabbi Chodakov calling. The barber then asked me if he could go immediately to give the Rebbe a haircut...”

**Routine blood tests should not be performed** on *erev Shavuos*. In his *Shulchan Aruch*, the Alter Rebbe notes a dispute among the *poskim* regarding procedures that might not be included in the prohibition of letting blood on *erev yom tov*. This reference has led to leniencies with regard to blood tests on *erev Pesach* and *erev Sukkos*. Nevertheless, *erev Shavuos* is different than other *yomim tovim* in that there is an added concern of danger from letting blood.

It is therefore recommended to refrain from blood tests on *erev Shavuos*. This year, the recommendation against blood tests is extended to include *erev Shabbos*.

**Baked dairy foods:** *Shulchan Aruch* states, “One must not knead dough with milk lest he mistakenly eat [the bread] with meat. However, it is permissible to produce a small quantity [of dough mixed with dairy], just enough to eat at once, or else he may alter the appearance of the bread so that it is recognizable [as unusual bread], so that he will not eat it with meat.” (*Yoreh De’ah*, 97:1.) On this the *Rema* comments, “Accordingly, we are accustomed to bake bread kneaded with milk for the festival of *Shavuos* ... for all this is considered a small quantity [that is to be eaten immediately]. In addition, the shape [of the dairy bread prepared for *Shavuos*] is different from ordinary bread. Certainly, then, cheese pastries are permitted.”

**“One should purify himself** before *yom tov*.” This refers to going to the *mikveh*, in addition to other spiritual preparations. The *Sh’lah* states that this obligation is all the more meaningful before the festival of *Shavuos*, because the entire Jewish nation, men and women, immersed themselves at the command of Hashem in preparation for receiving the Torah. He notes that although the Zohar implies to immerse shortly before dawn on the night of *Shavuos* after studying Torah the entire night (and this is the custom in Eretz Yisrael), we should also immerse before *yom tov* in order to enter the festival in a state of purity and to mirror our ancestors who immersed during the day, before sunset on the eve of receiving the Torah at Mount Sinai.

**Flowers, plants, and trees** have long been used to decorate *shuls* and homes in honor of *Shavuos*, as described in *Shulchan Aruch Admur HaZaken*, to recall the joy of Matan Torah and also to remind us to pray for the fruits of the trees whose fate is decided in heaven each *Shavuos*. This custom is mentioned in *Lu’ach Chabad* and was practiced in the *shul* in Nikolayev, but it is actually **not** the Chabad custom (in Chabad *shuls*).

**Flowers in full bloom** may be moved on *yom tov*, as long as one intended to move them beforehand or mentally

designated them for a permissible purpose before *yom tov*. Water may be added to the vase, but its present water cannot be changed. This is only allowed on *yom tov*, not on Shabbos. Water may be added only to a vase containing blooms that are not stimulated to open by water. Great care must be exercised when moving a vase containing blooms that are stimulated to open in such fashion; they must be moved extremely gently.

We cannot arrange the flowers on *erev Shavuos* this year because it is Shabbos and arranging flowers would be considered preparing for the next day. We must take care of floral arrangements today, before sunset. (*Shulchan Aruch Admur HaZaken.*)

**Those who give *tzedakah*** on a daily basis should give extra *tzedakah* on *erev Shavuos*, for both days of the festival. Included in our *tzedakah* obligations is the duty to provide the needy with their *yom tov* requirements. This year, the extra *tzedakah* should be given on *erev Shabbos*, and sufficient *tzedakah* for the next three days should be given.

**Preparing fire for candle lighting:** It is forbidden to light a fire on *yom tov*, because creating a new entity is similar to performing a prohibited activity, and it is also something that could have been taken care of before the onset of *yom tov* (i.e., on *erev Shabbos*). Therefore, one should prepare – on *erev Shabbos* – a candle or flame that will burn safely for more than 72 hours from which to light the *yom tov* candles for the first and second night of *Shavuos*. A gas flame may be used for this purpose.

**A word of caution:** Fire and safety organizations recommend that if you leave a burner lit over *yom tov*, make sure that a nearby window is open at least 4 inches, and another window is open on the other side of the house, to allow proper ventilation. Also make sure that smoke detectors and a carbon monoxide detector are present and active.

**Shabbos timers:** Those who regularly make use of Shabbos timers should plan ahead for all days of Shabbos and *Shavuos* when setting their timers.

**Candle Lighting:** We light the candles and then recite the

blessing like on a regular Shabbos. Candle lighting is at **8:08 pm** in New York (eighteen minutes before sunset). Candles may **not** be lit after sunset.

**Shtei HaLechem:** With the speedy coming of Moshiach, the following law will apply: In the *Beis Hamikdash*, the two loaves for the Shavuos offering are baked on *erev* Shavuos. This year, however, due to the fact that *erev* Shavuos coincides with Shabbos, the two loaves must be baked one day early – on *erev* Shabbos. Consequently, the two loaves will be eaten on the third day after they were baked.

## Shabbos, 5 Sivan

**Lechem HaPanim:** With the coming of Moshiach, the following will apply: In the *Beis Hamikdash*, the twelve loaves of the Showbread are regularly replaced each Shabbos. On an ordinary Shabbos, the loaves are shared among the members of the *mishmar* (division of *Kohanim*) allotted to that week's service. This Shabbos is an exception, due to the fact that Shabbos is directly followed by *Yom Tov*. Due to the fact that the *Kohanim* of all the *mishmaros* are present in the *Beis Hamikdash* in honor of Shavuos (not only the *Kohanim* of that week's exclusive *mishmar*), therefore, all the *Kohanim* receive an equal share in the Showbread. (*Mishnah, Sukkah 5:7.*)

**One who naps** on Shabbos afternoon, should not say explicitly that he is doing so in order to prepare for Shavuos.

**We should refrain** from washing our hands for a meal from the tenth hour of the day (**4.41 pm**). Those who are accustomed to eating *challah* at their *seudah shlishis* should take care to do so before this time. If, for whatever reason, one did not eat *seudah shlishis* earlier, he should eat it even after the tenth hour. (*Shulchan Aruch Admur HaZaken.*) In the latter case, he should only eat a small quantity of food. (*Minhagei Maharil.*)

## The First Night of Shavuos (Motzei Shabbos)

**Before lighting the *yom tov* candles** on the first night of Shavuos, one must recite *baruch ha-mavdil bein kodesh le-kodesh*.

Candles are lit **after** nightfall (*tzeis ha-kochovim*), which is at **9:18 pm** in New York. The light must be drawn from a pre-existing flame. The blessings *le-hadlik neir shel yom tov* and *shehechyanu* are recited after lighting the candles (as is done on Shabbos). One who will recite *shehechyanu* later tonight, during kiddush, should not recite that blessing over the candles.

**One who forgot to light his gas burner** or the like before *yom tov* (i.e., on *erev* Shabbos) may now ask a non-Jew to do so.

**“Accept the yoke of Torah!”** instructs the Rebbe Rayatz (*Sefer HaSichos* 5704, p. 127). We should do so on the night of Shavuos both in our hearts and also verbally, declaring: *“Ribono shel olam! (Master of the Universe!) I hereby accept upon myself the yoke of Torah.”*

**Maariv is delayed until after *tzeis ha-kochavim***, which in New York is at **9:18 pm**. The Torah requires us to count seven *complete* weeks. If *Maariv* were to be prayed earlier on the first night of Shavuos, then the sanctity of the festival will have arrived and the last of the 49 days of the *sefirah* would have been cut short. This year, Shavuos begins as soon as Shabbos ends; there is no need to delay *Maariv* further than the conclusion of Shabbos at **9:18 pm**.

**Maariv begins with *shir ha-ma'alos*** and includes the *Amidah* for *shalosh regalim*. Since it is also *motzei* Shabbos, *vatodi'einu* is added to the *amidah*. One who forgot this passage cannot perform activities that are forbidden on Shabbos – even though they are permitted on *Yom Tov* – until he recites *Havdalah* or *baruch ha-mavdil bein kodesh le-kodesh*.

**Kiddush for the first night of Shavuos** may **not** be recited early, while it is still daylight. This year, *Kiddush* also contains *Havdalah*. *Kiddush* is recited in the following order: The introductory paragraph *askinu se'udasa* for *yom tov*, followed by five blessings: (1) *borei peri ha-gafen*; (2) *kiddush (mekadesh yisrael ve-ha-zemanim)*; (3) *borei me'orei ha'esh* (4) *ha-mavdil bein kodesh le-kodesh* (5) *shehechyanu*. A woman who recites *kiddush* omits *shehechyanu* because she already recited that blessing when lighting the *yom tov* candles.

**The Chabad custom during *havdalah*** on *yom tov* is to simply gaze at the candles but not to draw two candles together. Nor are the fingernails extended close to the flames.

**The blessing over spices** is **not** recited. See *Likkutei Sichos*, vol. 31, p. 191 *ff.*

The final word of *havdalah* is changed from *le-chol* to *le-kodesh*. It is best that one who inadvertently recited *bein kodesh le-chol* listen to someone else's recital of *havdalah*. If that is not possible, he should repeat the entire *havdalah* himself. (This was explained at length at the *Kinnus Torah* during last *chol hamoed* Pesach. The discussion was printed in *B'asra D'rav*, issue 3.)

**Shavuos marks the *yahrtzeit* of the Baal Shem Tov.** In this regard, the Rebbe directed: "The Rebbe [Rayatz] stated that it is a custom of the Chabad *Rebbeim* to review a teaching of the Baal Shem Tov and to recount a story about him on Shavuos. Nevertheless, since the Rebbe [Rayatz] pointedly informed *us* of this custom, it is appropriate for each of us – each Jew that hears about this custom – to review a teaching of the Baal Shem Tov and to recount a story about him on the festival of Shavuos, the anniversary of his *hillula*."

*Ya'aleh ve-yavo* is included in *birchas ha-mazon*.

**One who forgot *ya'aleh va-yavo*** but realized his error before pronouncing Hashem's name at the conclusion of the blessing *bonei Yerushalayim* should simply return to *ya'aleh ve-yavo*. If he already pronounced Hashem's name, he should finish that blessing and then recite the text printed in the *Siddur* for this purpose – *baruch ... asher nassan yomim tovim le-amoy Yisrael le-sasson u'le-simchah, ess yom chag ha-Shavuos ha-zeh; baruch ... mekadeish Yisrael ve-ha-zemanim*.

However, if he already began the next blessing after *bonei Yerushalayim* – even if he merely recited the word *baruch* of that blessing – he must repeat the entire *birchas ha-mazon* from the beginning.

**The *ha-rachaman*** for *yom tov* is added during *birchas ha-mazon*.

**Many remain awake all night studying Torah**, particularly *torah sheba'al peh*. It is written that he who remains awake in study the entire night of Shavuos is guaranteed to live through the coming year without suffering harm.

**On Simchas Torah 5652**, the Rebbe Rashab stated: “I own a handwritten manuscript of the Mittlerer Rebbe in which he promises that whoever remains awake the entire night of Shavuos will merit the crown of Torah (*kesser torah*). The Mittlerer Rebbe was a *posek* (halachic authority)....” At that point, the Rebbe Rashab rose to his feet and declared, “Listen, all Jews! We must remain up on the night of Shavuos!” He then sat down and continued, “I mean it literally! We must remain awake; we simply cannot go to sleep!”

**The Chabad custom is to recite *tikkun leil shavuos***. The Rebbe Rayatz records that the Rebbe Rashab would begin reciting the *tikkun* immediately after candle lighting, as soon as Shavuos began. He would then interrupt for *Maariv* and the *yom tov* meal and resume after the conclusion of the meal. One who did not complete the *tikkun* at night should complete it the following day.

**There are a number of corrections** to the standard versions of the *tikkun*. The Rebbe notes that the passage that concludes *Sefer Yetzirah* often appears as

“נאמנת בפנים . . אחד בפה ואחד בלב”

This ending does not make sense and is not a positive conclusion to the book. It should rather read:

נאמנת ג' רעות ללשון דיבור רע והמלשין והמדבר אחד בפה ואחד בלב ג' טובות ללשון שתיקה ושמירת הלשון ודיבור אמת.”

The Rebbe further observes that Rashbi's teaching

“אנן בחביבותא תליא מילתא דכתיב כו”

is missing its third supporting verse and should read:

“אנן בחביבותא תליא מילתא דכתיב ואהבת את ה' אלקיך וכתוב מאהבת ה' אתכם וכתוב אהבתי אתכם אמר ה'.”

**The appropriate manner in which to recite the *tikkun***, the Rebbe explained, is to read it as if its words were right now being transmitted to us from Hashem Himself in the most awe-evoking Divine revelation identical to the revelation at Mount Sinai – “with awe and fear, trembling and perspiration.”

The Rebbe encouraged us to explain this to whomever we are able to reach, so that every Jew is aware that at the very moment he recites the sacred words of the *tikkun*, Hashem personally repeats the identical words along with him! With this awareness, the *tikkun* must certainly be recited in an appropriate manner, with due awe and reverence.

The Rebbe insists that the proper preparation to *kabolas ha-torah* on Shavuos is not in depth study, not even of *Chassidus* and *pnimiyus ha-Torah*, as some mistakenly believe. Rather, it is simply reciting the *tikkun* all the way through to its *minyan ha-mitzvos*, and to do so with the appropriate awareness as described above. This is indeed the appropriate rectification (*tikkun*) for receiving the Torah.

**Reading the words with one's mind** is insufficient. He must take care to recite each word aloud, so that he can clearly hear what he is saying.

**One who recites selections** from *torah she-bichsav* but is not sufficiently learned to comprehend the words he utters has nevertheless fulfilled the *mitzvah* of Torah study. This is not the case with selections from *torah she-ba'al peh*, for which he is not considered having studied at all if he does not comprehend the words he recites. Nevertheless, one is encouraged to busy himself with all words of Torah, even that which he cannot comprehend. In the future era, he will be granted the ability to fully comprehend the same teachings that he studied without understanding their meaning. (Cf. *Imrei Pinchas*, 274.)

**Mikveh:** It is customary to immerse in a *mikveh* towards morning, just before the crack of dawn. In New York, dawn will occur at **3:36 am**. It is customary to dip four times.

*Lu'ach Colel Chabad* quotes the relevant teaching from the writings of the Arizal (*Sha'ar HaKavanos*): "Upon the approach of morning, slightly prior to the crack of dawn, while the eastern sky is yet darkened – for that is the moment known as *ayelet ha-shachar*, as is known – one must then immerse in a *mikveh*. He must concentrate on the supernal *mikveh*, which is *kesser elyon* of *zah* [*ze'ir anpin*], for that is drawn down to him on this night, and it is referred to as the fiftieth gate, as we have written.

Regarding him is stated, ‘I will sprinkle pure water upon you,’ etc. [Yechezkel 36:25]. Through this we receive additional sanctity from this realm of *kesser*.”

The immersion should be performed “approximately a quarter of an hour before the light of day” (*Rema MiPano*) or “approximately half an hour before the light of day” (*Tur Barekes*).

Eating and drinking before *Shacharis* is forbidden according to *Chazal*. This applies once the time for *Shacharis* has arrived, at dawn each morning. However, one who cannot concentrate on his prayers without nourishment is permitted to eat and drink. This remains true nowadays, despite the fact that our powers of concentration remain relatively diminished regardless of nourishment. Moreover, there is a well-publicized statement of the *Rebbeim* regarding the value of nourishing the body in preparation for prayer. Nevertheless, one should first recite the morning blessings and the full three paragraphs of *shema* before eating or drinking in the morning.

There is another issue with eating before *Shacharis* from a kabbalistic perspective, according to which food and drink at that time may empower the forces of *kelipah*. The time frame for this concern is a matter of dispute; it begins either at dawn or midnight. **Here again, nourishment is permitted for the sake of health, concentration in prayer, and similar concerns.** All opinions concur that the prohibition would not begin earlier than dawn if one did not sleep at night, or if he slept less than “sixty breaths.” (The Rebbe quotes *Eshel Avraham* who states that one may also eat if he awakens during the night and plans to go back to sleep before dawn. The statement of *Eshel Avraham* appears to imply that even if one goes to sleep after dawn, he may eat and drink before sunrise.)

Dawn is at **3:36 am** in New York.

**The bedtime *shema*:** “In Lubavitch, there were nights on which we did not recite [the prayer before retiring] – the eve of Shavuos”. (Sefer HaSichos 5702, p. 100.)

**The Baal Shem Tov instructed that special care be taken** not to engage in idle talk from the onset of Shavuos until after reciting *kesser* in the *kedushah* of *Musaf*. (Needless

to say, this does not suggest that we may engage in such chatter after *kesser*) The time for *tikkun leil Shavuos* should certainly not be wasted in idle chatter, as we would thereby lose the benefit of having stayed awake.

## Sunday, the First Day of Shavuos

**Reciting the *tikkun*** throughout Shavuos night does not exempt one from reciting *k'rias shema* at the proper time in the morning. One should therefore plan his sleep schedule accordingly. To study the entire night and then fail to recite the morning *shema* before its deadline would be completely counterproductive.

**The time for the morning *shema*** begins at dawn, according to Torah law. As a precaution, *Chazal* delayed its time until the daylight is strong enough for one to recognize his acquaintance at a distance of four *amos*, because that is when the majority of people awaken. If there is no other choice, it may be recited from its biblical time on – from dawn. The deadline for reciting *shema* is at the end of the third halachic hour of the day

In New York, the time for *Shema* begins at **4:22 am**. (If there is no choice, it may be recited as early as **3:36 am**.) The time for *shema* ends at **9:08 am**.

**Before one goes to sleep** in the morning after studying the entire night, he should arrange for someone to awaken him in time to recite the morning *Shema* and *Shacharis*. It is not forbidden by *halachah* to go to sleep even if there is no one to awaken him for this purpose, nevertheless, it is clearly unwise and inappropriate if it may result in sleeping past the deadline and neglecting the biblical commandment to recite the morning *shema* in its proper time.

As a precaution, it is worth reciting the *shema* immediately after dawn, bearing in mind that if he does not have an opportunity to repeat the *shema* in the ideal time established by *Chazal* (later than **4:22 am**, but before its deadline), he will have nevertheless fulfilled his obligation.

**When faced with the option of remaining awake** and praying *Shacharis* at sunrise, or going to sleep in order to pray in a refreshed state of mind, the Rebbe favored the

second option if sleeping would permit one to pray with greater concentration. The Rebbe noted, however, that what works for one person will not necessarily work for another. Some feel invigorated after a brief nap, while others feel even groggier than before it. The Rebbe Rayatz related that the Rebbe Rashab would sometimes sleep first, although it is unclear whether this was his prevalent custom.

**It is our custom** to recite all the morning *berachos* as usual, including *al netilas yadayim* and *elokei neshamah* (based on a secret (unofficial) directive of the Rebbe Rayatz), even if one remained awake the entire night and did not change his clothing. Nevertheless, if possible, it is better to sleep a little before reciting the blessings. The only difference between one who slept during the night and one who remained awake is that the former may recite these blessings after midnight, while the latter must wait until after dawn to recite these blessings. The same applies to *birchas ha-Torah*.

**The blessing over the *tzitzis* may not be recited** if one has worn the same pair of *tzitzis* throughout the night and has not changed them in the morning. It is best to recite the blessing over another pair, and thereby exempt the original pair from a blessing.

***Shacharis*:** for those that daven *Shacharis* early in the morning, the earliest time to make a *beracha* on the *tallis* is at **4:22 am** in New York. The *Amidah* should be scheduled to begin only after sunrise (**5:25 am**).

***Hallel*:** the best way to fulfill the *mitzvah* of reciting *Hallel* is to recite it together with the congregation, immediately after the *Amidah* of *Shacharis*. That way, one will recite *hodu* and *ana* in response to the *chazzan*.

In *Igros Kodesh*, the Rebbe mentions the case of one who enters *shul* in order to begin *Shacharis* and discovers that the congregation has already recited the *Amidah* and is poised to begin *Hallel*. The Rebbe states, “I never heard an explicit directive regarding reciting *Hallel* before one has recited *Shacharis*. According to oral tradition among the *chassidim*, however, despite the fact that our Rebbeim would extend their *Shabbos* prayers over many hours – long after the congregation had concluded the

service – they would nevertheless organize their time on *yom tov* so that they would conclude the *Amidah* with the congregation and then recite *Hallel* together with them.

The *Amidah* for *shalosh regalim* is followed by the complete *hallel* (*hallel shaleim*).

(In his *Shulchan Aruch*, the Alter Rebbe mentions a custom of distributing spices among the congregants in *shul* on Shavuos. He warns against doing so from the start of *Baruch She-amar* until after the *Amidah*. However, as far as we know, this is no longer an existing custom.)

**When the *aron* is opened for the reading of the Torah,** *Yud gimmel midos ha-rachamim* and *Ribbono shel olam* are recited; two *sifrei* Torah are removed. Five *aliyos* are read in the first scroll from *Parshas Yisro* (from *Bachodesh ha-shelishi* until the end of the *sedrah*), which discusses the events surrounding the giving of the Torah. The second *sefer* Torah is used to read *Maftir* from *Parshas Pinchas* (*u-ve-yom ha-bikurim*), which describes the offerings of the festival of Shavuos.

**The liturgical Shavuos poem, *Akdamus*:** *Shulchan Aruch Admur HaZaken* states that where there is no particular custom, *Akdamus* should be recited before reading the Torah, before the *kohen* recites his opening blessing over his *aliyah*. *Akdamus* was thus recited in many communities that follow the Alter Rebbe's opinions, as well as in the city of Yekaterinoslav (now known as Dnepropetrovsk). However, in *HaYom Yom* and *Sefer HaMinhagim*, the Rebbe states that we do **not** recite *Akdamus*. (At the Rebbe's Shavuos meal, on the first night of Shavuos 5727, a discussion took place regarding the Rebbe's personal custom in this matter.)

**During the *aseres ha-dibros*,** the entire congregation stands facing the Torah. The *aseres ha-dibros* are read according to *ta'am ha-elyon*, whereby all the verses are split into ten sections, with each section containing one of the ten *dibros*; since the *dibros* were given on this day, we read it in a manner similar to the way they were said when the Torah was given. The common custom is to always read it in this manner, even on *Shabbos Parshas Yisro* and

*Shabbos Parshas Va-eschanan*; the *ta'am ha-tachton* is only used while reading in private.

In *HaYom Yom*, it is noted that in 5740 the Rebbe called for all children including tiny infants to come to shul on Shavuos to hear the *aseres ha-dibros*. In *Likkutei Sichos* (vol. 28, p. 315), the Rebbe instructs: As mentioned many times before, based on the teaching of *Chazal*: “Hashem says to the Jewish people, ‘My children! Read this Torah portion each year and I will consider as if you are standing before Mount Sinai and receiving the Torah.’ Just as the *aseres ha-dibros* were originally delivered in the presence of the entire Jewish nation, men, women, children, and even the extremely young, it is worth the effort to ensure that when this portion is read on the festival of the giving of the Torah each year, **all Jewish people and even its very youngest members are present in shul, at least during the reading of the *aseres ha-dibros***. We should recall that the Torah was giving in merit of the Jewish people offering their **children** as guarantors.” (In many *sichos*, the Rebbe discusses bringing children from the age of one month and upwards, or even younger, if their health allows for it.)

**Hakhel:** The Rebbe explains the association between Shavuos and *hakhel* in many places. In the *hakhel* year of 5741, the Rebbe encouraged even more forcefully that children’s rallies be held at which the children could hear the reading of the *aseres ha-dibros*.

**For the *Haftorah*,** we read *ma’aseh merkavah* from *Yechezkel*, because Hashem appeared to us at Mount Sinai accompanied by myriads of angels. It is customary to conclude with the verse, *Va-tisa’eini ru’ach*, although it is not written in the same section as *ma’aseh merkavah*. In some communities, a *chacham* and *gadol* is called upon to read this *Haftorah*. Some are accustomed to reading it while standing, not only the person who reads the *Haftorah*, but also all who read along with him quietly also remain standing out of reverence for its contents.

**Musaf:** The *Amidah* is that of *shalosh regalim*. Following the *nussach* of the Alter Rebbe, it is Chabad custom to recite *shnei se’eirim le-chapeir* during *Musaf*, corresponding to the additional goat that was offered on Shavuos accompanying the *shteí ha’lechem* (two loaves).

**Birchas Kohanim (duchenen)** is recited at the end of *Musaf*. While they do so, the congregation should move their heads in the following sequence: *Yivarechaha* – head erect. *Hashem* – lean head to the right. *Ve-yishmerecha* – head erect. *Ya'eir* – lean head to left. And so on.

Recite the *Ribono Shel Olam* prayer only while the *kohanim* are singing, but not when they pronounce the actual words. At that point, you must remain silent and listen carefully. The prayer is split into three parts: While the *kohanim* sing before *ve-yaseim*, recite from *Ribono* until *ha-tzaddik*. While they sing before *lecha*, recite from *ve-im* until *Elisha*. While they sing before *shalom*, recite from *u'kesheim* until *le-tovah*. Then, as they pronounce *shalom*, recite the three final words *ve-sishmereini*, etc. Once the *kohanim* conclude *shalom*, say *amein* followed by *adir ba-marom*, while covered by the *tallis*.

“**Mazel tov!**” was the customary greeting on Shavuos among the first generations of Chassidim. At first, they would wish each other *mazel tov* at the reading of the Torah. However, because it is stated in *sefarim* that this constitutes an interruption, they started wishing each other *mazel tov* **after** the reading of the Torah. Eventually, it was moved to after the conclusion of the prayer service. “I recall elders in the town of Lubavitch who would announce *mazel tov* on the festival of Shavuos” (*Sefer Hasichos Kayitz* 5700. This is explained in *Sichas Chag HaShavuos* 5713).

**It is forbidden to fast a *ta'anis chalom* (for a disturbing dream)** on Shavuos because we must eat and rejoice on the day that the Torah was given to show that the Jewish people welcome and enjoy the day on which they received the Torah. Hence, it is forbidden to fast on Shavuos, although it is permitted on every other *yom tov* and even on Shabbos. (The Rebbe explains this at length in *Likkutei Sichos*, vol. 23.)

**For Kiddush**, we recite *Askinu se'udasa* for *yom tov* and then *Eileh mo'adei* and *Borei peri ha-gafen*.

**If one remembers that he neglected to recite *Shehechyanu*** on the first night of Shavuos, he should recite the blessing today whenever he realizes his omission.

## Seudas Yom Tov

“Although the Shavuos meal is a *yom tov* meal, it is mainly a *se’udas mitzvah*...it is a *se’udah* of *kabbolas ha-Torah ve-ha-mitzvah*. If when we bring even a single Jewish child into the *bris* of *Avraham Avinu* or into *cheder*, the accompanying meal is considered a *se’udas mitzvah*, then certainly when six hundred thousand men of military age, in addition to the elderly, the womenfolk, and the children, are brought by Hashem into *cheder* to recite *kamatz-alef-ah* – as stated in the verse, “The King brought me to His chambers [*cheder*]; we will rejoice and be glad in You” (*Shir HaShirim* 1:4)! Hashem brought all of the Jews, men and women, into *cheder*. “We will rejoice and be glad in You [כ"ב]” meaning the twenty-two [כ"ב] letters of the Torah. The first letter that Hashem spoke was *kamatz-alef* of the word *anoichi* [“I am”]. Therefore the meal of Shavuos is first and foremost a *se’udas mitzvah*, in addition to its serving as a *se’udas yom tov*.” (*Sefer Hasichos* 5703; See also 1st day of Shavuos 5705.)

**It is customary in all Jewish communities to eat milk products** on the first day of Shavuos. A Jewish custom is considered Torah, especially as in this case, many insights into the custom have been given. Since it is also a *mitzvah* to eat meat on each *yom tov*, care must be taken to avoid the prohibition of mixing meat and milk, and that all of the appropriate laws are observed. (The Alter Rebbe simply notes that there are numerous reasons for eating milk products. The *Rema*, for example, traces this custom to the *shteit ha’lechem*, two breads that were offered only on Shavuos, which imply two meals for which we need to wash and eat bread separately; the bread used in a *milchig* meal may not be used for a *fleishig* meal. Accordingly, although we are now accustomed to merely eating *mezonos* at the *milchig* meal, the *mezonos* is also considered bread for this purpose.)

**The custom to eat a *milchig* (milky) meal** on Shavuos does not override the obligation, the *mitzvah*, of eating meat on *yom tov*. The former is a custom, while the latter is a *mitzvah*. However, we are not permitted to eat dairy and meat products in the same meal even if we wait the necessary time in between courses. Therefore, a *brachah*

*acharona* on the *milchig* foods must be recited before washing for the meaty meal.

**It is our custom to wait** one hour between milk and meat. This spans the time from finishing *milchigs* to beginning eating *fleishigs*, so washing can commence soon after concluding the dairy meal.

We should use this opportunity to teach our children to wait between eating dairy and meat, each according to his/her age.

**Is it six-hour cheese?** American cheese can certainly be considered one-hour cheese. Other hard cheeses may be “six-hour” cheeses since they were cured for six months or more. (There are some *poskim* who require waiting one hour for each month it takes to produce the cheese.)

Modern cheese production has changed the curing process drastically, and this further varies their rulings. For our purposes, we will cite the *Yad Yehuda* (*Yorah Deah* 69), who posits that we need not be concerned of the possible “six-hour” status of cheese that is melted, and it requires only a one-hour wait. Thus, with regard to modern cheeses which are melted (other than those aged for six months), one may be lenient.

**A sharp food** such as an onion, radish, lemon, or head of garlic (and in many regards, somewhat sharp foods such as pickled cucumbers), that was chopped with a meaty knife or blender (some are stringent even if a meaty cutting board was used), even if the object was not *ben yomo* (meaning that it was not used for a hot meat product during the last 24 hours), may not be used with milk or milk products. The same applies also in reverse: sharp food that was cut with a milky knife cannot be eaten with meat. In the latter case, according to many opinions, the food cannot be eaten even within the six hours period following the eating of meat. (This stringency does not apply in reverse, i.e. after eating a sharp food cut with a meat knife, one may subsequently eat milk.) Naturally, it is best to keep a *parveh* knife and cutting board for just such purposes.

**The brachah on cheesecake** that has even a thin crust is *mezonos*. The question is whether an *Al hamichya* can be

recited if the crust itself is not a full *kezayis*. In this case, the amount necessary (*k'dei achilas pras*) is determined to be one-sixth of the total *kezayis* volume. If one is not sure that this requirement is fulfilled, he should take another piece of *mezonos* and also another food that calls for a *Borei nefashos* (a drink cannot serve this purpose one if has already recited *borei peri ha-gafen*) and make both *brachos acharonos*.

**A *brachah acharonah* must be recited** on the *milchige* meal before washing for the second meal. If a person forgets, it should be made during the next meal. If *birchas hamazon* was already said, an *Al hamichya* is no longer required, but a *Borei nefashos*, if necessary, should be said.

**When eating *mezonos*** at the *milchige* meal, one should take care not to eat so much as to be *kove'ah se'udah*, otherwise he may be required to recite *birchas hamazon*. (See *Seder Birchas Hanehenin*, Chapter 2)

**A *Kiddush* cup used** at the *milchig* meal should not be used again at the *fleishig* meal, in case any dairy residue remains on the cup.

**A latecomer to a *yom tov* meal** who discovers that the people have already finished their dairy foods and are now eating their meat meal – whereas he still needs to eat dairy in honor of Shavuos – should not proceed to eat dairy food on the same tablecloth as those eating their meat meal. There must be distinct tablecloths for meat and for dairy.

**To fulfill the obligation of rejoicing on *yom tov***, men must drink a *revi'is* of wine. This requirement may be satisfied through drinking the wine of *Kiddush*. The Rebbe Rayatz was accustomed to drinking a *revi'is* of wine at each *yom tov* meal. Children should be given foods they enjoy to help them rejoice on *yom tov*.

**Although rejoicing on *yom tov* is a biblical obligation** (*d'oraisa*), one should not get drunk. In fact the *Rambam* specially warns against overdoing the obligation of drinking wine on *yom tov*.

**The obligation of *oneg yom tov*** means drinking wine during each *yom tov* meal, if one can afford it, and having plenty of meat, wine, and delicacies, according to one's means.

**Minchah:** Korbonos, Ashrei, U-va le-tziyon, Amidah for shalosh regalim.

**Tahaluchah:** “It has been customary for many years now, that during *yom tov* we go to visit our Jewish brethren in other synagogues and *batei midrashos* in many other communities, in order to amplify the joy of the festival by uniting with large numbers of Jews from additional communities, and especially by reviewing Torah teachings (*‘The commandments of G-d are upright, causing the heart to rejoice’ – Tehillim 19:9*) culled from both the revealed and mystical teachings of the Torah.”

**One should avoid eating a *se’udah* after the tenth halachic hour of the day (4:41 pm),** in order to be able to enjoy the *yom tov* meal on the second night of Shavuos.

**It is forbidden to cook or prepare** anything on the first day of *yom tov* for the second day. Therefore, when cooking for the first day, the food must be prepared in such a manner that it will be ready to eat before sunset (*sheki’ah*), which in New York, is at **8:27 pm**. From *tzeis ha-kochavim*, it is permissible to begin cooking and preparing for the second day of *yom tov*.

In New York, 2nd day *yom tov* begins at **9:18pm**.

**Laws pertaining to the era of Moshiach:** *Bikurim* are not brought before Shavuos (*Bikurim* chapter I, Mishna 3). On the holiday itself, there are different opinions in the *Rishonim* as to whether it is permissible to bring *Bikurim* (see *Tosefos Bechoros 26a s.v. melay’ascha. Maharit Algazi ibid. Minchas Chinuch mitzva 18. Sh’ut Igros Moshe Orach Chaim vol. I inyani kodshim siman 1*).

**Korbonos of the holiday:** In addition to the individual *korbonos* that everyone had to bring (*olas r’eyah, shalmei chagiga, and shalmei simcha*) communal *korbonos* are brought for the holiday, a *korbon musaf* that includes: two cows, one ram, and seven lambs – for an *olah*, and a goat for a *chatas*, as detailed in *Parshas Pinchas*. In addition, a *korbon “mincha chadasha”* is brought on Shavuos which consists of two loaves of bread from the new wheat (*“shtei ha’lechem”*) and offered with the bread were seven unblemished lambs, one ox, two rams for an *olah*, a goat for a *chatas*, and two lambs for *shlamim*, as detailed in *Parshas Emor*.

Because of the extra goat on Shavuos which is brought

together with the two loaves, our custom, according to the Alter Rebbe (unlike the view of the *Daas Zekeinim M'Baalei Tosfos Pinchas* 28:28), is to say in the *Musaf* prayer of Shavuos "two goats for atonement" (see *Sha'ar Ha'Kollel* 40:15, glosses from the Rebbe *ibid.* See also sources cited in *HaMoadim B'Halacha* II:82).

## Sunday Night, the 2nd Night of Shavuos

**Candles are lit for the second day of Shavuos after *tzeis ha-kochavim***, which in New York is at **9:18 pm**. The flame must be taken from a pre-existing flame, i.e., one that has remained lit since before the onset of Shabbos *erev* Shavuos.

**Two blessings are recited** over the candles: *Le-hadlik ner shel yom tov* and *Shehechyanu*.

**Maariv and Kiddush** are like a regular *yom tov*. We recite *Shehechyanu* in *kiddush*.

## Monday, the 2nd Day of Shavuos

**Shacharis** is identical to the Shacharis of the previous day.

**Megilas Rus:** *Shulchan Aruch Admur HaZaken* records the custom of reading *Megillas Rus* in *shul* on Shavuos, to impart the message that the Torah can be acquired only by those who are willing to undergo suffering and poverty in order to merit it, as reflected in the story of Rus, who converted and embraced the Torah under such conditions. He states that a blessing should not be recited over this reading.

Although it is **not** the Chabad custom to read *Rus*, neither in *shul* nor at home, the Rebbe emphasizes that the theme of *Rus* and its association with Shavuos is not diminished. In fact, *Megillas Rus* is expounded at length in the teachings of Chassidus on Shavuos. Its importance is further underscored by the fact that the entire *Megillas Rus* is included in the *tikkun* that we recite on the night of Shavuos while almost every other book of the Torah is represented in the *tikkun* by only a number of verses. Only those subjects that are deeply connected to Shavuos (such as *ma'aseh ha-merkavah*) appear in their entirety. The Rebbe also explains that the crucial connection to

Shavuos is the fact that *Dovid Ha'Melech* was born and passed away on Shavuos and that the purpose of *Rus* is to detail the ancestry of *Dovid Ha'Melech*.

**Five *aliyos* are read from the first *sefer torah***, from the portion *Kol ha-bechor*. The *Maftir* is read from the second scroll, exactly as on the first day of Shavuos. The *Haftorah* is from *Tefilah le-chavakuk* until *lamnatze'ach bin'ginaso*. However, others including Chabad have the custom to begin from *Va-shem be-heichal kodsho*.

*Yizkor* is recited as well as *Av harachamim*.

The difference *yizkor* and *av ha-rachamim* is that *yizkor* is recited by individuals in the merit of individual souls, whereas *av ha-rachamim* is recited by the public in the merit of the souls of all departed Jews – the departed Jewish community at large. Usually, on a day in which *tachanun* is not recited, *av ha-rachamim* is also omitted because it is a universal form of *yizkor*. But today, when individuals need to recite *yizkor*, they recite *av ha-rachamim* as part of that service. And since *av ha-rachamim* will inevitably be recited in *shul* by those who recite *yizkor*, it may also be recited by those who do not need to recite *yizkor*, if they so wish.

*Musaf*, *Kiddush*, and *Minchah* are identical to the first day of Shavuos.

***Farbrengen***: It is customary to wash one's hands for bread before sunset and to eat at least the quantity of bread equal to a *kebeitzah*. The *niggunim* of the Rebbeim are sung.

At these Shavuos *farbrengens*, the Rebbe often demanded an increase in Torah study, including the daily study of *Chitas* and Rambam. Here is an excerpt of one such *farbrengen*:

"... this applies to the *shi'urei chitas* – the daily study of Chumash (divided according to the days of the week), of Tehillim (divided according to the days of the month), and of Tanya (divided according to the days of the year). These three *shi'urim* correspond to the three shepherd of the Jewish people who are associated with Shavuos. Chumash is associated with Moshe Rabbeinu who received the Torah at Sinai. Tehillim is the book of Dovid HaMelech who passed away on Shavuos. And Tanya is the elucidation

of the teachings of Rabbi Yisrael Baal Shem Tov whose *hillula* is also on Shavuos. And how good, appropriate, and so on, it would be to apply this to the daily study of Rambam (divided into an annual cycle of three chapters a day, or a three-year cycle of one chapter a day, or an annual cycle of Sefer HaMitzvos.)” (*Chag HaShavuos* 5751; *Sefer HaSichos* 5751, vol. 2, p. 560.)

**Hakhel:** “These spiritual influences,” said the Rebbe during his delivery of a *ma’amor* on the second day of Shavuos in the year 5748, “that are elicited during the festival of Shavuos to each and every Jew (as we have just discussed), infuse a Jew with the power to perform his divine service in the days to come. When he is slack in his divine service, G-d forbid, the influences we have just described will give him no rest. They will prod him to perform his service in the coming days to the fullest extent!

“This service begins immediately after Shavuos with the days of *tashlumin* [that are intimately associated with Shavuos and] that last until and including the twelfth of Sivan. (We do not recite *tachanun* on these days, as the Alter Rebbe records in his *Siddur*, because the Shavuos sacrifices [that were too numerous to be brought during the actual festival] are offered in this period.) These themes will then be elicited into the entire year that follows.

“In this way, the coming year will contain all of the blessings alluded to with the letters of the Alef-Beis, [from *alef*] until [*taf*], a year of Torah, etc. This is all the more critical given that we are in a year of *hakhel*, and the year of [5748, which in Hebrew spells the words] *tismach*, “you shall be happy,” and *tisamach*, “you shall make others happy.” All of this will lead to the most important blessing, the concept of *hakhel* in its literal sense and in a tangible manner (so that one can point at it with his finger and say, “this is it!”): the assembly of all Jews in the Holy Land, in the holy city of Yerushalayim, in the *beis hamikdash* and its Courtyard. We will then read portions of the Torah there, and it will be as if we were hearing it directly from Hashem’s mouth. That will indeed have its desired affect [as stated in the Torah,] that we “fear Hashem all the days”!

If one’s *yom tov* meal (or *farbrengen* if he washed for bread) extends past nightfall – even if it extends many hours into the night – he must recite *ya’aleh ve-yavo* during *birchas ha-mazon*. As long as his meal began at a

time when *ya'aleh ve-yavo* was required, that obligation continues for the duration of his meal.

In New York, Yom Tov ends at **9:19 pm**.

**Maariv** we recite *ato choinantonu*.

## Tuesday, *Isru Chag*

**Laws pertaining to the era of Moshiach:** During the days immediately following *Shavuos*, we may offer the following mandatory *Yom Tov* sacrifices that we did not have an opportunity to offer during *Yom Tov*: *shalmei simchah* and *chagigah*.

As for the *olas r'eyah*, although the established halacha is like *Beis Hillel* who say it is permissible to bring it on *Yom Tov* itself, still in this case, *Beis Hillel* did as *Beis Shamai* said not to bring them on *Yom Tov* (since it is not needed for food we do not desecrate the *Yom Tov* for it, since it is possible to bring it after *Yom Tov*). Many Jews did the same, and brought it after *Yom Tov*, the day after *Shavuos* (*Shulchan Aruch Admur HaZaken* Orach Chaim siman 494:19. See *Likutei Sichos* 28:24ff.).

The day after *Shavuos* is called *Yom T'voach*, i.e. when the *olos r'iyah* were brought. For this reason, it is forbidden to fast on *Isru Chag* *Shavuos* by force of law (not merely per custom as it is on other days of *Isru Chag*).

The day following a festival is referred to as *Isru Chag*. This name is derived from the verse, *Isru chag ba-avosim ad karnos ha-mizbe'ach* ("Bind the festival [offering] with cords until [you bring it to] the horns of the altar" – *Tehillim* 118). Taken literally, the phrase *isru chag* means to bind the festival itself, which Chazal explain as connecting (binding) the day following the festival with the actual festival, i.e., to celebrate in honor of the festival that has just ended. This celebration, Chazal explain, takes the form of feasting, as alluded in the alternative meaning of *ba-avosim* – with fattened cattle. The verse's final phrase, "To the horns of the altar," allude to the fact that whoever celebrates by eating and drinking a little more than usual on the day after the festival, and treats it as a mini-festival in honor of the departed festival, is considered having built an altar and offered an actual sacrifice to Hashem. It is

customary to eat and drink at little more than usual and to avoid fasting altogether. Even a bride and groom on the day of their wedding, and even one who marks the anniversary of his parent's passing, is prohibited from fasting. This is only a custom, because according to the strict law, fasting is indeed permitted on *Isru Chag* Pesach. Nevertheless, withholding oneself from fasting in honor of *Isru Chag* brings blessing.

In a *Farbrengen* on the 2nd Day of Shavuos 5749 (Hisvaduyos p. 294) the Rebbe said:

The custom which has been established over a number of years and in numerous locations, to arrange of Kinus Torah following and in close proximity to all of the three major festivals [Pesach, Shavuos, and Sukkos] ... and especially Shavuos - for being the "time of the Giving of the Torah", it is the most appropriate time to hold a Kinus Torah... We should strive to publicize this custom wherever it has not yet been implemented, so that the people of those locations will likewise arrange a Kinus Torah in continuation of, and in proximity to, the festivals - i.e., on the day of *Isru Chag*. They should consider the local conditions and hold the Kinus during subsequent days instead, if doing so will allow for a larger attendance.

## Shabbos Parshas Naso, Sivan 12

Av ha-rachamim and tzidkasecha tzedek are not recited.

**Pirkei Avos is recited after Minchah.** This week the first chapter is read. (See *Sichas Shabbos Parshas Naso* 5751.)

In the year 5751, the Rebbe held a special *farbrengen* on the final day of the *yemei ha-tashlumin* for Shavuos. He distributed *kol shel berachah* to all present.

**Hakhel:** At a *yechidus klalis* on Sivan 9, 5748, the Rebbe stated, "...Certainly during the festival of Shavuos, the time in which the Torah was given and at which time the concept of unity is emphasized to the greatest extent, as the Torah states, '*Yisrael camped there, facing the mountain [of Sinai]*' – using the singular *va-yichan*, literally, '**he** camped,' indicating that the Jewish people were then united 'as one man with one heart.' This occurred on Rosh Chodesh Sivan [six days prior to the Giving of the Torah]. How much greater was the

unity at the actual event of the Giving of the Torah! The Jews were then fully and perfectly united. As one, they cried out *na'aseh ve-nishmah*, "We will do and we will hear!" As one, they accepted upon themselves to perform and hear (meaning, to understand) all the words of the Torah – including its golden rule of loving a fellow Jew as one loves himself.

"*These days are recalled and done.*' At the time of the Giving of the Torah each year – beginning with Rosh Chodesh Sivan and continuing throughout the days of preparation for Shavuos, the unity of the Jewish people is reawakened anew so that we are 'as one man with one heart' to the extent that this influences us during the remainder of the year – so that each and every Jew feels his unity with each other Jew wherever he may be. (This is especially true of the people together with whom he celebrated Shavuos in the literal sense.)

"This is all true of the essential time of the festival of Shavuos [regardless of our input]; how much more so through our active efforts to fulfill the *mitzvos* of this festival, and to an even greater extent through our efforts that are specifically designed to strengthen unity. These efforts will certainly influence the entire year in the same spirit!

"All of the above is greatly magnified this year, because it is a year of *hakhel*. It is an extremely opportune time to unite all Jews, men women, and children!"

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# The Definition and Implications of Chodosh

Erev Shavuos speech by Horav Y.Y. Braun

Shabbos Parshas Bamidbar, 5771 at 770 Eastern Parkway

Adapted by Dr. Binyamin Abrams, PhD

A girl once wrote to the Rebbe regarding the campaign for young girls to light Shabbos candles. She explained that the idea was new to her family custom and wondered: isn't "*chodosh assur min HaTorah?*"

• • •

Rambam writes regarding the mitzvah of the *Omer* and the *Shtei Halechem*: The *Omer*, an offering of barley flour from the new crop of the year, is brought on the second day of Pesach and allows the *chodosh* (new crop) to be consumed. Before the *Omer* is brought, no *chodosh* could be eaten; one is permitted only to eat from the remainder of the previous year's crop (*yoshon*). This concept is known as "*chodosh assur min HaTorah*"—new (crop) is forbidden (to be eaten) by the Torah. The *Shtei Halechem* is a *korban* of two loaves brought on Shavuos from bread made of wheat flour from the new crop of the year—the first time that *chodosh* wheat flour was used in the *Beis Hamikdash*. The *Omer* and *Shtei Halechem* are both brought from *chodosh* and have the effect of allowing the *chodosh* to be used for the rest of the year. Additionally, both offerings are brought on a *Yom tov*, the *Omer* on Pesach and *Shtei Halechem* on Shavuos.

Despite their apparent

similarities, the *Omer* and *Shtei Halechem* offerings have significantly different effects: the *Omer* offering is "*matir chodosh l'hedyot*" (causes the *chodosh* to be permissible for all people/purposes), while the *Shtei Halechem* is "*matir chodosh l'gavao*" (allows *chodosh* for holy purposes only, such as sacrifices). From the Rambam's wording of these *halachos*, it seems that the Rambam understands there to be a fundamental difference between the connection of each of these *korbanos* and the *yom tov* on which they are brought. The *Omer* is connected to Pesach only insofar as its time to be brought is on Pesach. It is not a *yom tov* obligation as such, rather a means with which to be *matir* the new crop. The *Shtei Halechem*, however, is one of the *korbanos* that are integral to the celebration of Shavuos.

There is a practical lesson to be learned from the above practical about dealing with all new *inyonei chol* (worldly things). The *Omer*, which is connected with the *hedyot*, instructs us about how novel things, such as fashion and technology, can be used for worldly purposes. The *Omer* is not a *korban* of the *yom tov*; rather, if we want to use the new crop, we would have

to first be sure that the *Omer* offering was brought. So too with new technologies and modern trends - they are not necessities. Should we desire to use them, we must first ensure that the *Omer* was brought. The *Omer* offering is made from barley flour, which is primarily considered to be animal fodder - corresponding to our *nefesh habahamis* (animal soul). The proper way to approach new things is that we must first ensure that we have achieved an appropriate spiritual standing: A person must first offer his *nefesh habahamis* as a *korban* to Hashem. He is then elevated, “*omer hatenufah*” (uplifted and removed), and may use the *chodosh*. In that way, we ensure that the new things are only used in a correct, holy fashion.

Conversely, the *Shtei Halechem* teaches us about how these same new things can be used for holy purposes. The *Shtei Halechem* is also referred to as “*lechem hatenufah*.” Here too, it is always important to exercise caution when dealing with new things; even when we are involved in holy pursuits, it is still important to be careful, removed, and different (from anything influenced by worldly attitudes). This idea can be seen from the *Shtei Halechem*, a *korban* that is an intrinsic part of *yom tov*. This teaches us that a person must first bring a *korban* to be elevated and to be certain that it is truly holy. This is the accomplishment of the *Shtei Halechem*, an offering made from wheat—human food which is used to elevate the *nefesh elokis* (G-dly soul).

This has the effect of permitting the new things and ideas to be used properly for *kedusha*.

While both the *Omer* and the *Shtei Halechem* offerings have the effect of making the *chodosh* permissible, they have different qualities. This idea can also be seen by the fact that the *Omer* was sifted more than the *Shtei Halechem* (13 sifters, in contrast to 12 sifters). This difference shows us that new *inyonei chol* require thorough investigation and analysis before we can use them, while new approaches and attitudes in *kedusha*—though they still require us to be diligent—are not as risky. Still, a *korban*, i.e. *avoda* (individual work) is required in **both** cases.

• • •

In response to the girl’s question, the Rebbe replied that reading a newspaper, secular studies and makeup are also new to her “family” (klal Yisroel). He asked if, like her apprehension to introduce candle-lighting to young girls, she was also particular about introducing these other new ideas. The Rebbe concluded that in a time where the world is increasing in darkness, our mission is to increase in light.

This is one of the lessons that can be learned from the mitzvos of the *Omer* and *Shtei Halechem*: new things (*chodosh*) need not always be added in worldly matters—and if they are, it should be with great caution and preparation. On the other hand, *chodosh* in holy matters is something positive and should be encouraged—provided that it has proper direction.

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