

Shavu'ot

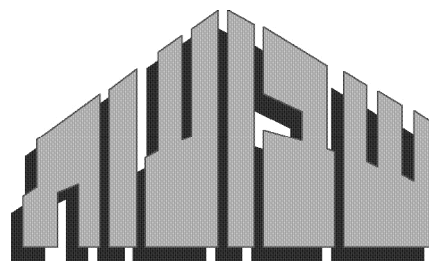
May 26th-28th, 2012

שבועות

שנת תשע"ב

Biblical Commandment to Observe Shavu'ot

"You shall count off seven weeks; start to count the seven weeks when the sickle is first put to the standing grain. Then you shall observe the Feast of Weeks..."
Devarim 16:9-10



Festival Schedule:

Saturday evening, May 26th, 2012

Shavu'ot begins after *havdalah* for Shabbat, candle lighting at 9:46pm

Tikkun Leil Shavu'ot (Night study sessions in local communities)

Check with your synagogue for prayer service and "*tikkun*" times

Sunday, May 27th, 2012

First day of *Yom Tov shel Shavu'ot* - Morning Festival services held at your local synagogue, including joyous *Hallel* and special Torah and Haftarah readings

Erev Shavu'ot Day II candle lighting 9:48pm

Monday, May 28th, 2012

Second day of *Yom Tov shel Shavu'ot* - Morning Festival services held at your local synagogue, including joyous *Hallel*, special Torah and Haftarah readings, and the **YIZKOR** memorial service

The two days of *yom tov* are concluded with Havdalah after 9:50pm

Appropriate Greeting for the Festival:

חג שמחה!

Hag Samei'ah!

Happy Festival!



Background Information:

The name of our festival “Shavuot” is the Hebrew word for “weeks.” As the translation of the biblical passage above makes clear, Shavu’ot is often referred to as the Feast of Weeks. This title is a reference to the counting of the seven weeks that occurs between the second day of Passover and the first day of Shavu’ot, known as the “Counting of the Omer.” The Omer was a special grain offering offered at the Temple and Israelite farmers would make pilgrimage to Jerusalem in order to make it. The festival of Shavu’ot falls on the fiftieth day (the day after the last day of the counting of the omer) and can also be called “Pentecost,” which means 50th in Greek. The omer offering is not the only agricultural aspect of Shavu’ot. As a result of the fact that the festival also marks the beginning of a new agricultural season and the harvesting of the *bikurim*/“first fruits,” a farmer was also able to fulfill the commandment to bring the first fruits offering to the Temple as well. One could bring this offering to Temple at any time during the harvesting season, which lasted until Sukkot. As was the case with all three pilgrimage festivals (Pesah, Shavu’ot, and Sukkot), deep connections existed between them and the agricultural calendar. This led the festivals to be called by other names, even in the Torah. Shavu’ot was known as *Hag Ha’Katzir* (the Harvest Festival) in Exodus 23:16 and reference to the *bikurim*/first fruits in Leviticus ch. 23 led to the name *Hag Ha’Bikurim* (the First Fruits Festival). However, in our day, we are much more familiar with Shavu’ot as a celebration of the giving of the Torah, “*Z’man Matan Torateinu*.” This association did not emerge until the post-biblical period.

The nature of Shavu’ot began to shift after the destruction of the Second Temple in the year 70 CE. Without the Temple, the two Biblical agricultural commandments related to Shavu’ot could no longer be observed. At some point in the rabbinic period, the Rabbis were able to find a new meaning for the festival that did not rely on the Temple or agricultural rites. The Torah itself teaches that the revelation event at Mount Sinai took place in the third Hebrew month (Sivan). This being the very same month that contains the conclusion of the counting of the omer, the Rabbis were able to find an additional reason to celebrate Shavu’ot in their “modern” period.

One final perspective should be added to the way that we view and understand Shavu’ot. While it can be seen as an independent festival that stands alone with its own meanings and causes for celebration, there is also an option to view it with Pesah in contrast to Sukkot and Sh’mini Atzeret. This is possible because when the rabbis refer to Shavu’ot, they often use the word Atzeret. Sh’mini Atzeret is an additional festival day for which God requested the people of Israel to linger in God’s presence and to conclude the season of repentance that began in Elul and stretched through Rosh Hashana, Yom Kippur, and Sukkot (7 weeks of time). Shavu’ot also concludes a period of seven weeks of counting of the omer that began on Passover. These two final festival days allow the children of Israel to linger in God’s presence just a little longer, culminating in a celebration of receiving God’s most precious gift to us: the Torah.



Festival Customs and Traditions

Tikkun Leil Shavu'ot/All-night Torah study

According to the Midrash, the night before the Torah was given, the Jews went to sleep to be well-rested for the big day ahead. However, they failed to rise early and Moses had to come to wake them up to meet God who was already waiting atop the mountain. In order not to make this error again, the tradition of staying up all night studying Torah and Jewish subjects emerged (so that one will be awake at the crack of dawn to receive the Torah once again on Shavu'ot), beginning with the Kabbalists in 16th century Tzfat. Any subject may be learned, although Talmud, Mishna and Torah typically top the list. In many communities, classes and lectures in the wee hours of the morning are offered. In Jerusalem, thousands of people finish off the nighttime study session by walking on foot to the Kotel before dawn and joining the sunrise minyan there. The latter activity is reminiscent of Shavuot's status as one of the three Biblical pilgrimage festivals, when the entire Jewish nation living in the land of Israel journeyed to Jerusalem to celebrate the holiday.



Eating Dairy foods

Dairy foods such as cheesecake, cheese-filled blintzes and dairy ice cream are traditionally served on Shavu'ot. Eating dairy is a tradition that emerged based on an understanding of Shavu'ot as the time when Israel received the Torah and became bound by its laws, most notably Kashrut in this case. When the Israelites realized that their meats were not in accordance with Kashrut laws, they chose to eat dairy!

In addition, King Solomon describes the Torah as "honey and milk are under your tongue" (Song of Songs 4:11).

Reading the Book of Ruth

Each of the five books of the Tanakh/Hebrew Bible known as *Megillot*/"scrolls" is publicly read in the synagogue on a different Jewish holiday. The Book of Ruth corresponds to the festival of Shavuot both in its descriptions of the harvest season and Ruth's desire to become a member of the Jewish people, who are defined by their acceptance of the Torah. Moreover, the lineage described at the end of the Book lists King David as Ruth's great-grandson. According to tradition, David was born and died on Shavuot.

Greenery/Decorations

According to the Midrash, Mount Sinai suddenly blossomed with flowers in anticipation of the giving of the Torah on its summit. For this reason, Jewish families traditionally decorate their homes and synagogues with plants, flowers and leafy branches in honor of Shavu'ot. Some synagogues decorate the bimah with a canopy of flowers and plants so that it resembles a chuppah, as Shavu'ot is mystically referred to as the day the matchmaker (Moses) brought the bride (the Jewish people) to the chuppah (Mount Sinai) to marry the bridegroom (God); the k'tubah (marriage contract) was the Torah.

When Shabbat and Festivals either coincide or directly follow one another, the prohibition against cooking on a festival for any day other than that day of the festival would make preparing meals for Shabbat impossible. Therefore, the Eruv Tavshilin/“Meal Cooking Boundary” was instituted as a means for making it possible to “continue” cooking that had already begun before the festival on a festival day for a Shabbat to follow. Before the onset of the festival, one must begin the cooking process for the festival and Shabbat and then set aside some of those prepared dishes to be eaten on Shabbat, as a sign that the cooking that was taking place was indeed for Shabbat. What is set aside must be two separate dishes, usually a cooked or roasted dish (most often a hard-boiled egg) and a piece of bread. Whatever was set aside must then be eaten on Shabbat. Once these dishes are set aside and the textual formula (found below) is recited, one is permitted to cook on *Yom Tov* for Shabbat. No cooking is ever permitted on Shabbat. If one mistakenly forgets to set aside the *eiruv tavshilin*, it is permitted to cook for Shabbat on the festival because it is permitted to rely on the *eiruv of the Rabbi* in your community. However, it is not permitted for one deliberately to ignore the need to create an *eiruv*, as that would show a purposeful disregard for a law, and one from the Torah at that, which is prohibited.

Before candle lighting on the first night of the festival, recite the following blessing and declaration.

ברוך אתה ה' אלהינו מלך העולם, אשר קדשנו במצותיו, וצונו על מצות עירוב.
Barukh ata Adonai, eloheinu melekh ha-olam, asher kid'shanu b'mitzvotav v'tzivanu,
al mitzvat eruv.

Blessed are You, Lord our God, sovereign of the universe, who has sanctified us with the commandments, and commanded us regarding the commandment of *eiruv*.

Continue with the following declaration:

בעירוב הזה יהא מותר לנו לאפות ולהטמין ולהדליק נר, ולעשות כל צרכינו מיום טוב לשבת לנו
 ולכל ישראל הדרים בעיר הזאת.

Ba'eiruv ha'zeh y'hei mootar lanu le'e'fot u'l'bat'min, u'l'hadlik ner, v'la'a'sot kol tzor'h'einu mi'yom tov l'shabbat,
lanu u'l'kehol yisra'el ha'da'rim ba'ir hazot.

By means of this mixture (eruv) we are permitted to bake, cook, warm, kindle lights, and make all the necessary preparations during the Festival (yom tov) for Shabbat, we and all who live in this city.

ברוך אתה ה' אלהינו מלך העולם, אשר קדשנו במצותיו, וצונו להדליק נר (של שבת ושל יום טוב).
Barukh Atah Adonai Eloheinu melekh ha-olam asher kid'shanu b'mitzvotav v'tzivanu l'hadlik neur (shel Shabbat
v') shel yom tov.

Blessed are You, Lord our God, sovereign of the universe, who has sanctified us with the commandments, and commanded us to light the candles [of Shabbat and] of the festival.

בָּרוּךְ אַתָּה ה' אֱ-לֹהֵינוּ מֶלֶךְ הָעוֹלָם, שֶׁהַחַיִּינוּ וְקִיָּמְנוּ וְהִגִּיעָנוּ לַזְמַן הַזֶּה.
Barukh Atah Adonai, Eloheinu, melekh ha'olam she'beheyanu v'kiy'yanu la-z'man ha-zeh.
Blessed are you, Lord, our God, sovereign of the universe who has kept us alive, sustained us, and enabled us to reach this season.

Blessing the Children

ברכת הבנים והבנות

For Sons:

לבנים:

יְשִׁמְךָ א-לֹהִים כְּאַפְרַיִם וְכִמְנַשֶּׁה:
Y'simkha Elohim k'Ephrayim v'kb'Menasheh
May God make you like Ephraim and Menasheh

For Daughters:

לבנות:

יְשִׁמְךָ א-לֹהִים כְּסָרָה, רִבְקָה, רָחֵל, וְלֵאָה:
Y'simeikh Elohim k'Sara, Rivka, Raheyl, v'Leah.
May God make you like Sarah, Rebecca, Rachel, and Leah.

For All Sons and Daughters:

לכל הבנים והבנות:

יְבָרְכֶךָ ה' וְיִשְׁמְרֶךָ.
Y'varekh'kha Adonai v'yishm'rekha.
May God bless you and protect you.

יָאֵר ה' פָּנָיו אֵלֶיךָ וִיחַנֶּךָ.
Ya'eir Adonai panav eilekha vi'khuneka.
May God shine God's presence upon you and be gracious unto you.

יִשָּׂא ה' פָּנָיו אֵלֶיךָ וְיַשֵּׁם לְךָ שָׁלוֹם.
Yisa Adonai panav eilekha v'yaseim l'kha shalom.
May God lift God's presence be toward you and grant you peace.

Kiddush for Shavu'ot Eve

קדוש לערב שבועות

לשבת: וַיְהִי עֶרֶב וַיְהִי בֹקֶר יוֹם הַשְּׁשִׁי. וַיְכַלּוּ הַשָּׁמַיִם וְהָאָרֶץ וְכָל צָבָאָם וַיְכַל אֱ-לֹהִים בַּיּוֹם הַשְּׁבִיעִי מְלַאכְתּוֹ אֲשֶׁר עָשָׂה: וַיִּשְׁבֹּת בַּיּוֹם הַשְּׁבִיעִי מְכָל מְלַאכְתּוֹ אֲשֶׁר עָשָׂה. וַיְבָרֶךְ אֱ-לֹהִים אֶת יוֹם הַשְּׁבִיעִי וַיְקַדֵּשׁ אוֹתוֹ, כִּי בּו שְׁבֹת מְכָל מְלַאכְתּוֹ אֲשֶׁר בָּרָא אֱ-לֹהִים לַעֲשׂוֹת:

On Shabbat Eve only: Vay'hi erev vay'hi vokeir yom ha'shishi. Va'y'khalu ha'shamayim v'ha'aretz v'khol tz'va'am va'y'khal Elohim ba'yom ha'sh'vi'i m'lakhto asher asa. Ya'yish'bot ba'yom ha'sh'vi'i mikol m'lakhto asher asa. Va'y'varekh Elohim et yom ha'sh'vi'i va'y'kadeish oto, ki vo shavat mikol m'lakhto asher bara Elohim la'asot.

On Shabbat Eve: It was evening, it was morning, the sixth day. The heavens and the earth and all that were within it were completed. On the seventh day, God completed all the work that God had done. Then, on the seventh day, God rested from all the work that God had done. Then, God blessed the seventh day and sanctified it, for on it did God rest from all the work of creation that God had done.

סְבָרִי מָרְנוּ וְרַבָּנוּ וְרַבּוֹתַי.
Savri maranan v'rabanan v'rabotai.

בְּרוּךְ אַתָּה ה' אֱלֹהֵינוּ מֶלֶךְ הָעוֹלָם, בּוֹרֵא פְרִי הַגֶּפֶן.
Barukh Atah Adonai Eloheinu melekh ha-olam borei p'ri ha-gafen.
Blessed are You Lord our God, sovereign of the universe who creates the fruit of the vine.

בְּרוּךְ אַתָּה ה' אֱלֹהֵינוּ מֶלֶךְ הָעוֹלָם, אֲשֶׁר בָּחַר בָּנוּ מִכָּל עַם וְרוֹמַמְנוּ מִכָּל לָשׁוֹן, וְקִדְּשָׁנוּ בְּמִצְוֹתָיו.
וַתִּתֵּן לָנוּ ה' אֱלֹהֵינוּ בְּאַהֲבָה, אֶת יוֹם [הַשַּׁבָּת הַזֶּה וְאֶת יוֹם] חַג הַשְּׁבוּעוֹת הַזֶּה, זְמַן מִתֵּן וַתּוֹרִתֵנוּ,
[בְּאַהֲבָה] מִקְרָא קִדְּשׁ, זִכָּר לַיְצִיאת מִצְרָיִם: כִּי בָנוּ בְּחִרְתָּ, וְאוֹתָנוּ קִדְּשָׁתָּ מִכָּל הָעַמִּים, (וְשַׁבָּת)
וּמוֹעֲדֵי קִדְּשׁ (בְּאַהֲבָה וּבְרַצוֹן) בְּשִׂמְחָה וּבְשִׂשׁוֹן הִנְחַלְתָּנוּ. בְּרוּךְ אַתָּה ה', מִקְדֵּשׁ [הַשַּׁבָּת וְ] יִשְׂרָאֵל
וְהַזְּמַנִּים.

Barukh Atah Adonai Eloheinu melekh ha-olam asher bahar banu mi-kol am, v'rom'manu mi-kol lashon v'kei'd'shanu b'mitzvotav, va-titein lanu, Adonai Eloheinu, b'ahava et yom [haShabbat haZeh v'et yom] hag ha'Shavu'ot haZeh, yz'man matan Torateinu, [b'ahava] mikra kodesh, zeikher li'tzi'yat mitz'ra'yim. Ki vanu vaharta v'otanu qidashta mikol ha'amim (v'Shabbat) u'mo'adei kod'sh'keha (b'ahava u'v'ratzon) b'simha u'v'sason hin'haltanu. Barukh Atah Adonai, m'kadesh [ha-shabat v'] Yisra'el v'ha'z'manim.

Blessed are you, Lord our God, sovereign of the universe who has chosen us from among all peoples, and exalted us above every language and sanctified us with God's commandments, and you gave us, Lord our God, with love the day [this day of Shabbat and the day] this Feast of Weeks, the time of our receiving of our Torah [with love] a holy convocation, a memorial of the Exodus from Egypt. Indeed, You have chosen us and made us holy among all peoples and (and Shabbat) and Your holy seasons (with love and good wishes) with joy and gladness You passed down to us. Blessed are You, who sanctifies [the Shabbat and] Israel and the seasons.

בְּמוֹצָאֵי שַׁבָּת: בְּרוּךְ אַתָּה ה' אֱלֹהֵינוּ מֶלֶךְ הָעוֹלָם, בּוֹרֵא מְאוֹרֵי הָאֵשׁ.
On Saturday night: Barukh Atah Adonai Eloheinu melekh ha-olam, borei m'orei ha'eish.
On Saturday night: Blessed are You, Lord our God, sovereign of the universe who has created the lights of fire.

בְּרוּךְ אַתָּה ה', אֱלֹהֵינוּ מֶלֶךְ הָעוֹלָם, הַמְבַדִּיל בֵּין קִדְּשׁ לַחֹל, בֵּין אוֹר לַחֹשֶׁךְ, בֵּין יִשְׂרָאֵל לַעַמִּים, בֵּין יוֹם הַשְּׁבִיעִי,
לְשִׁשֶּׁת יְמֵי הַמַּעֲשֶׂה: בֵּין קִדְּשֵׁת שַׁבָּת לְקִדְּשֵׁת יוֹם טוֹב הַבְּדִלְתָּ, וְאֶת יוֹם הַשְּׁבִיעִי מִשִּׁשֶּׁת יְמֵי הַמַּעֲשֶׂה קִדְּשָׁתָּ, הַבְּדִלְתָּ
וְקִדְּשָׁתָּ אֶת עַמְּךָ יִשְׂרָאֵל בְּקִדְּשִׁתָּךְ. בְּרוּךְ אַתָּה ה' הַמְבַדִּיל בֵּין קִדְּשׁ לַחֹשֶׁךְ.

Barukh Atah Adonai Eloheinu melekh ha-olam, hamavdil ein kodesh l'hol, bein or l'hoshekeh, bein Yisra'el la'amim, bein yom ha'sh'vi'i l'sheishet y'mei ha'ma'a'se. Bein k'dushat Shabbat lik'dushat yom tov b'hdalta, v'et yom ha'sh'vi'i misheishet y'mei ha'ma'a'se kidashta, b'hdalta v'kidashta et amkeha Yisra'el bik'dushatekha. Barukh Atah Adonai ha'mavdil bein kodesh l'kodesh.

Blessed are You, Lord our God, sovereign of the universe who has differentiated between the sacred and the mundane, between light and dark, between Israel and the nations, between the seventh day and six days of activity; between the sanctity of Shabbat and the festivals have You differentiated, and the seventh day from the six days of activity have You sanctified, you have differentiated and sanctified Your people Israel with your holiness. Blessed are You, the One who differentiates between the holy and the holy.

בְּרוּךְ אַתָּה ה' אֱלֹהֵינוּ מֶלֶךְ הָעוֹלָם, שֶׁחַיֵּינוּ וְקִיָּמָנוּ וְהִגִּיעָנוּ לַזְּמַן הַזֶּה.
Barukh Atah Adonai, Eloheinu, melekh ha'olam she'he'yanu v'keiy'manu v'higi'yanu la-z'man ha-ze.
Blessed are you, Lord, our God, sovereign of the universe who has kept us alive, sustained us, and enabled us to reach this season.

לשבת: וְשָׁמְרוּ בְּנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל אֶת הַשַּׁבָּת, לַעֲשׂוֹת אֶת הַשַּׁבָּת לְדֹרֹתָם בְּרִית עִוְלָם. בֵּינִי וּבֵין בְּנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל אוֹת הִיא לְעֹלָם, כִּי שֵׁשֶׁת יָמִים עָשָׂה יְיָ אֶת הַשָּׁמַיִם וְאֶת הָאָרֶץ, וּבַיּוֹם הַשְּׁבִיעִי שָׁבַת וַיִּנָּפֶשׁ.

On Shabbat Afternoon: V'shamru v'nei Yisra'el et ha'Shabbat, la'asot et ha'Shabbat l'dorotam b'rit olam. Beini u'vein b'nei Yisra'el ot bi l'olam ki sheisbet yamim asa Adonai et ha'shama'yim v'et ha'aretz, u'va'yom ha'sh'vi'i shavat va'yinafash.

On Shabbat Afternoon: The children of Israel shall observe the Shabbat for all their generations as an everlasting covenant. Between Me and the children of Israel shall it be an everlasting sign, for in six days did God create the heavens and the earth, and on the seventh day he ceased from work and rested.

וַיְדַבֵּר מֹשֶׁה אֶת מוֹעֲדֵי ה' אֶל בְּנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל:

Va'y'dabeir Moshe et mo'adei Adonai el b'nei Yisra'el.

Moses declared the sacred times of the Lord to the children of Israel.

סָבְרֵי מָרְנוּ וְרַבָּנוּ וְרַבּוֹתֵי.

Savri maranan v'rabanan v'rabotai.

בָּרוּךְ אַתָּה ה' אֱלֹהֵינוּ מֶלֶךְ הָעוֹלָם, בּוֹרֵא פְּרֵי הַגֶּפֶן.

Barukh Atah Adonai Eloheinu melekh ha-olam borei p'ri ha-gafen.

Blessed are You Lord our God, sovereign of the universe who creates the fruit of the vine.

The hands are ritually washed before breaking bread at any meal.

בָּרוּךְ אַתָּה ה' אֱלֹהֵינוּ מֶלֶךְ הָעוֹלָם, אֲשֶׁר קִדְּשָׁנוּ בְּמִצְוֹתָיו, וְצִוָּנוּ עַל נְטִילַת יָדַיִם.

Barukh Atah Adonai Eloheinu melekh ha'olam asher kid'shanu b'mitzvotav v'tzivanu al n'tilat yada'yim.

Blessed are You, Lord our God, sovereign of the universe, who has sanctified us with the commandments, and commanded us to wash the hands.

Two round hallah rolls are held together for the recitation of the following blessing, marking the beginning of the festive meal.

בָּרוּךְ אַתָּה ה' אֱלֹהֵינוּ מֶלֶךְ הָעוֹלָם, הַמוֹצִיא לֶחֶם מִן הָאָרֶץ.

Barukh Atah Adonai Eloheinu melekh ha'olam ha'motzi lehem min ha'aretz.

Blessed are You, Lord our God, sovereign of the universe, who has brought forth bread from the earth.

General Information:

<http://judaism.about.com/od/shavuot/>

<http://www.jewfaq.org/holidayc.htm> (see also the links on the side bar for additional detailed info)

<http://www.everythingjewish.com/Shavuot/origins.htm>

<http://www.holidays.net/shavuot/>

Information and Activities for the Whole Family:

http://learn.jtsa.edu/topics/kids/shavuot_together/ (use the links for information)

If any questions remain, please feel free to call or email Rabbi Matthew Bellas at rabbibellas@talmudtorah.com/604-736-7307, ext. 3403.