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## WEEK PRIOR TO YOM TOV

### Yom Yerushalayim

Celebration of the liberation of East Jerusalem and the Kotel Maaravi during the Six Day War in 1967.

### Rosh Chodesh Sivan

The Israelites arrived at Har Sinai (Shmos 19:1).

### Yom Hameyuchos

When Moshe Rabbeinu informed the Israelites that G-d has elected them to “a kingdom of priests and a holy people”, they responded with the words “all that G-d has spoken we shall do.” Thus, they affirmed their commitment to the Torah of Hashem (Shmos 19:8)

### Shloshes Y’mei Hagbolah

The Israelites underwent three days of preparation for Mattan Torah, which took place on Sivan 6.

## SHAVUOS

Shavuos Tefillos Schedule

### **Important reminders:**

1. Candle lighting time on is at
2. Preparations for the second day of Yom Tov should not begin before ----- on --- evening
3. Shecheyanu is recited for candle lighting and during Kiddush on both nights.
4. The Havdalah is included in the Kiddush on ---- night
5. Yizkor is recited on the second day of Yom Tov.
6. The conclusion of Yom Tov on --- night is at ---
7. The Havdalah on --- night includes only Borei Pri Hagofen and Hamavdil. Besomim spices and Havdalah candle are not required.

### NAMES OF THE YOM TOV:

- Festival of Reaping – The Yom Tov occurs during the harvest season. (Shamos 23:16, 34:22; Vayikra 23:22)
- Festival of the First Fruits – At this time, the farmers brought samples of the first freshly ripened fruits to the Bais Hamikdash as an act of gratitude to Hashem for his blessing. See Devarim 26:1-11 for the descriptions of this observance. The Mishnah of Bikkurim and Chapter 3 presents a delightful account of the colorful procession of the farmers to Jerusalem with their baskets of Bikkurim during the Bais Hamikdash era.
- Festival of Weeks – Shavuos – This name refers to the mitzvah of Sefiras i.e. the mitzvah to count 49 days – seven weeks from the second day of Pesach until Shavuos. (Vayikra 23:16 &17)
- Festival of the Giving of the Torah – This name is mentioned in the tefillos and the Kiddush of the Yom Tov.
- Atzeres – This name, mentioned in the Talmud (see Mishna Rosh Hashana 1:2), was adopted from the Eight Day of Succos which is designated by the Torah as Atzeres. What Shmini Atzeres is to Succos, so is Shavuos to Pesach. The intervening days of Sefirah are conceptually like a Chol Hamoed i.e. linking the two Yomim Tovim of Pesach and Shavuos. The message is clear: the giving of the Torah on Shavuos is the culmination of the



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freedom begun of Pesach.

### SPECIAL SHAVUOS MINHAGIM

- A. The shul is decorated with flowers and with shrubs. Some reasons for this minhag are the following:
1. It is reminiscent of Matan Torah, which took place on a mountain abundant with foliage.
  2. Moshe Rabbeinu was born on the Seventh of Adar and his mother hid him for three months until the Sixth of Sivan when she placed him in an ark amongst the river reeds. (Shmos 2:1-3)
  3. The flowers, etc. are reminiscent of the basket of Bikkurim, which were decorated by greens in addition to the newly ripened fruits.
  4. The Mishnah (Rosh Hashana 1:2) declared that “At four junctures of the year, the world is judged: on Pesach for the grain, on Shavuos for the fruit of the tree, on Rosh Hashana for all who walk on earth (i.e. mankind) and on the festival (i.e. Succos for water)
- B. Tikun Leil Shavuos – The Zohar commends those who remain awake during the first night of Shavuos in anticipation of the hour of receiving the Torah. During the course of history, a text called Tikun Leil Shavuos was composed for this purpose. The book contains selected passages from the Torah, Prophets, Ketubim, Mishnah, Talmud, etc. Of course, one is not restricted to this work, but may select other Torah materials for study.
- Even if one is not able to remain awake the entire night it is suggested that one studies for a short while before retiring. The ----- The Ten Commandments, or the Mishnah on Bikkurim are suggested selection for study. The study of Torah adds that special quality to the observance of Shavuos.
- C. AKDAMOS is read on the first Day of Yom Tov prior to the Krias HaTorah. This Piyut – liturgical poem – was composed by Rabbi Meier ben Rabbi Itzchak (11<sup>th</sup> century) who was a chazzan in the city of Worms. In communities throughout the world, Akdamos serves as the introduction to the Torah reading, the theme of which is Matan Torah. This Piyut, written in Aramaic “deals with the indescribable greatness of G-D, the excellence of the Torah and the future hope of Israel) Daily Birnbaum P. 647
- D. Reading Megillat Ruth on the Second Day of Yom Tov: After Shacharis tefillos and prior to the Torah reading, the Megillat Ruth is chanted and in some communities a parchment scroll is used and the reader recites the blessing – Al Mikrah Megillah ----- The reasons offered for this beautiful minhag are many:
1. From her birth, Ruth was worthy of accepting the mitzvot and the very letters of her name bear witness to it. The Hebrew letters for Ruth add up to 606 -- =200; -- =6; --=400; total = 606 and together with the Seven Noahide laws they equal 613.
  2. Our Israelite ancestors had the status of converts when they stood at the foot of Har Sinai to receive the Torah. The acceptance of the Torah was a covenantal act at which time they were converted from being merely the descendants of Avraham Avinu to a people, ---Kingdom of Priest, a holy nation (Shamos 19:6). Ruth too, was a convert. Her behavior as a devout and committed Jewess serves as a paradigm for would be converts and Jews alike.
  3. Ruth is the great grandmother of King David who was born and died on Shavuos.
  4. The seasonal context of Megillat Ruth was ‘at the beginning of the barley harvest’ (Ruth 1:22) and this is the Shavuos season as well.
- E. Eating Dairy Dishes – This practice is widely observed on Shavuos. Some also eat food baked or fried with honey. Caution: If anyone wishes to taste the special dairy dishes at a luncheon or dinner at which meat will be

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served, one must eat the dairy items prior to the meal and rinse the mouth before proceeding with the meat dishes. Otherwise, one must wait six hours after the meat meal before eating dairy foods. Several reasons are offered for this minhag:

1. The minhag is associated with the posuk -----“Honey and milk are under your tongue” (Shir HaShirim 4:11) which refers to one possessing knowledge of Torah.
2. The numerical value of the Hebrew letters constituting the Hebrew word for milk – cholov – add up to forty --- =8; --=30; ---=2;total =40 – corresponding to the forty days spent by Moshe Rabbeinu on Har Sinai.

F. Prior to Matan Torah, the Israelites were permitted to eat meat from non-kosher animals or meat from animals not slaughtered in accordance to the rules of Shechitah. The rules became effective at the time of Matan Torah. After Matan Torah, the utensils were treifa and besides, kosher meat was not immediately available. Thus, there was no alternative but to eat dairy foods until kosher meat would be available and the utensils were koshered.