

CHABAD CENTER FOR JEWISH LIFE  
OF MERRICK - BELLMORE - WANTAGH

# DIY SINAI

MAY 28-30, 2020 | 6-7 SIVAN, 5780



THIS TIME IT'S PERSONAL  
CELEBRATING SHAVUOT ON YOUR OWN

Dear Friend,

You know those holidays that take over the town? They're in the news and in stores; public offices close and public officials make celebratory statements.

But what about a special day on your personal calendar? It could be a private anniversary or the day you overcame a secret struggle. You look forward to the day and your heart swells with joy and pride. Yet to the world, it's just another day on the calendar.

The Jewish people have such a day. In fact, it is the day on which we became a people. The day is Shavuot, on which, 3,332 years ago, G-d came down onto Mount Sinai and gave us His holiest gift, the Torah. He spoke to us.

In these challenging times, with the world as we know it so suddenly changed and shaken up, tuning in to these personal moments and private celebrations become more important than ever. Our lives on a public scale have been slowed down, and those private interactions and deeply personal events take on new meaning as we each learn to celebrate and be thankful for the blessings in our lives.

Let's each take the time to truly celebrate Shavuot this year, to tune into our relationship with G-d and feel the greatest of blessings He's given us, the ability to connect with Him and feel His presence in our day-to-day lives, no matter how turbulent.

Wishing you a Happy Shavuot, and a Happy "Receiving of the Torah"

Sincerely,  
*Rabbi Shimon & Chanie Kramer*  
*Chabad Center for Jewish Life*

P.S. As per state guidelines, we will be holding small 'socially distanced' readings of the 10 commandments and yizkor services several times on Shavuot-May 29th. Please contact us for details at 516-833-3057 ext 108 or visit [Chabadjewishlife.org/tentablets](http://Chabadjewishlife.org/tentablets).

# Introduction

The holiday of Shavuot begins this year on the evening of Thursday, May 28, after sunset, and concludes on Saturday, May 30, after nightfall.

Shavuot is the anniversary of the day the Jewish people received the Torah at Sinai 3332 years ago. Before this event, there was a “barrier” of sorts between heaven and earth—it was impossible to be truly attached to G-d while living a material lifestyle. By G-d descending on Sinai and giving us the Torah, this barrier was lifted. Shavuot is thus a celebration of the day that enabled us humans to have a genuine relationship with G-d.

Jewish festivals do not merely memorialize events from the past; they are also spiritual reenactments of events from the past. Accordingly, each year on Shavuot, G-d issues the Torah anew. This means that He expands and deepens our ability to grasp the Torah and to find in it new vistas of relevance and meaning.

The reissuance of the Torah on Shavuot occurs when the Ten Commandments are read from the Torah on the first day of the *yom tov*. This is why it is so important to hear the reading of the Ten Commandments on this day.

Moreover, the Midrash teaches that before G-d gave us the Torah at Sinai, He asked for a guarantor. The Jews recommended their teachers and their elders, but G-d

declined; when the Jews suggested their children, G-d accepted. Only our children can assure that Judaism will thrive in future generations. Therefore, the Lubavitcher Rebbe encouraged that all children of all ages should hear the reading of the Ten Commandments on this day.

The name Shavuot means “weeks.” This *yom tov* goes by this name because the Torah instructs us to count each day for seven weeks beginning from the second night of Passover, and to celebrate Shavuot at the conclusion of these seven weeks. Shavuot is thus the culmination of a seven-week preparatory process. For seven weeks, we count each day in anticipation of receiving the Torah and prepare ourselves emotionally and spiritually for this momentous occasion.

This year, many Jews around the globe are unable to participate in synagogue services. This means that G-d desires that we reach the spiritual peaks of Sinai in our own homes. The goal of this booklet is to help you do just that.

Wishing you a wonderful *yom tov*! May you receive the Torah anew on this holiday, and may it be an internally uplifting and joyous experience!

# Preparations

“And you shall rejoice on your festival”  
(Deuteronomy 16:14).

A fundamental feature of the Shavuot holiday is joy—immense joy over the many physical blessings that we are fortunate to have, and transcendent joy over our spiritual heritage and mission.

In order to amplify the joy, we celebrate *yom tov* with lavish meals and a happy spirit. The traditional *yom tov* meal includes a fish course and a meat or chicken course. These foods commonly and cross-culturally enable pleasure and happiness, which are crucial on the holiday. If these items will not bring you pleasure and joy, feel free to design a different menu.

It is customary to eat dairy foods on the first day of *yom tov*, and popular choices include blintzes, ice cream, and cheesecake. A number of reasons have been offered for this unique custom:

- “Milk and honey are under your tongue.” So reads the verse in Song of Songs (4:11). The Talmudic sages read this biblical book as a metaphor of the

Jewish people and G-d communicating affection and longing for each other.

This particular verse is understood as a reference to Torah, which is spiritually sweet (honey) and nourishes the soul (milk). Accordingly, on the day when the Torah is given anew, we recall this symbolism by consuming dairy foods.

- When the Torah was given on Shavuot, the Jews immediately began to observe the kosher dietary laws. The meat that they had prepared in advance had not been prepared in accordance with these new laws and was suddenly deemed unkosher. In addition, their utensils and dishes were also not kosher. Since it was Shabbat, they were unable to prepare kosher meat, and the result was that their meals on that day were dairy.

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The following are some additional items that are needed for *Shavuot*:



**CANDLES OR  
TEA LIGHTS**

for *yom tov*  
candles



**Yahrzeit  
Candles**

to have an existing  
flame throughout  
*yom tov* and  
for Yizkor



**KOSHER WINE  
OR GRAPE  
JUICE**

for Kiddush



**TWO LOAVES  
OF CHALLAH**

(or two challah rolls)  
per *yom tov* meal



**SALT**

in which to  
dip the  
challah



**A PRAYER  
BOOK**

for the *yom tov*  
prayers and Grace  
After Meals

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Some have the custom to adorn their homes with a bouquet of flowers on Shavuot. A number of reasons have been offered for this custom, including that it increases our joy, and that it commemorates the greenery that miraculously sprouted on Mount Sinai when the Jews received the Torah.

In order to help set the joyous tone, Jewish law encourages us to purchase new articles of clothing for family members to wear on *yom tov*. For children, a treat or new toy can help them appreciate the spirit of happiness on their level.

There are various laws about the permissibility of cooking and baking on *yom tov*. One important ritual that is relevant this year, when the second day of Shavuot is Friday, is the *eiruv tavshilin*. For information about how to make one, visit: [www.chabad.org/2327](http://www.chabad.org/2327).

We are perhaps not used to dressing up and preparing a lavish meal when no guests will be coming over to join us. In truth, however, *yom tov* itself is the guest, and whether or not others will be joining, we ought to bestow on it the dignity and honor that it deserves. And the more we invest in the holiday, the more its rich resources will resonate within us.

# Cheese Blintzes

By Tzirel Chana

**Blintz Leaf:**

1 cup flour

2 eggs

1 cup milk

1 tsp oil (*any kind except olive*)

1 tsp white sugar

**Filling:**

1 ½ cup farmer cheese (*ricotta works too*)

½ cup white sugar

1 egg yolk

1 tsp fresh lemon juice

**Blintz:** Blend all ingredients until smooth.

Put batter in the fridge for an hour to set. (If you're in a rush, skip this step.)

Pour 1-2 Tbsp of oil into a non-stick frying pan.

When the oil is heated, pour in just enough batter so the floor of the pan is covered. Tilt the pan slightly – if necessary – to make a perfect (or imperfect) circle.

Fry until the edges of the blintz leaf begin to curl up. This will happen sooner than you think so hover over your pan. This isn't the time to multi-task.

Flip and let the blintz cook briefly on the other side. (Some people don't flip. They just remove the blintz from the pan at this point and add filling to the cooked side.)

**Filling:** Blend filling ingredients together until smooth.

Spoon 2 tablespoons of cheese filling into the center of a blintz leaf.

Roll the blintzes in the same way you would roll a wrap.

Refry the rolled blintzes in a small amount of oil, butter or margarine.

Serve plain or sprinkled with confectioners sugar.



8 BLINTZES

DAIRY

30-60 MINS

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# Classic Cheesecake *with fresh fruit*

By Miriam Szokovski

## Crust:

4 oz. / 120 g tea biscuits, *crushed*

½ cup sugar

8 tbsp. butter, melted

Pinch of salt

## Cheesecake:

24 oz. cream cheese (3 cups)

1 cup sugar

4 eggs

2½ tbsp. lemon juice

1 tsp. vanilla extract

¼ tsp. salt

1¼ cup heavy cream

**Crust:** Crush the tea biscuits to a fine crumb, and mix with the sugar, salt and melted butter.

Press the mixture down firmly into the base of the springform pan. Use the back of a spoon to help compress the mixture.

Bake at 350° F for 10 minutes, then set aside to cool.

**Cheesecake:** Let the cream cheese come to room temperature.

Using an electric mixer (stand or handheld), beat the cream cheese until smooth. Add the sugar, and mix until fully incorporated.

Add the eggs one a time. Wait until each one is fully incorporated before adding the next.

Pour in the lemon juice, vanilla and salt, and mix. Slowly pour in the heavy cream, and mix until smooth.

Pour the cheese mixture over the base.

Place the springform pan into the larger pan, and add 1 inch of water to the larger pan.

Bake at 350° F for approximately 60–75 minutes. In order not to overcook the cake, turn off the oven when the center is still jiggly (but not completely wet). Leave the cheesecake to cool in the oven for an hour. Then remove and let it cool completely.

Refrigerate cake until cold. Run a knife around the edge of the pan, then gently release the springform.

Top with fresh fruit.



1 CHEESECAKE

DAIRY

60-75 MINS

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# Holiday Candles

Jews around the globe usher in the holiday just as we usher in Shabbat—by lighting special candles. These glowing flames generate an atmosphere of reverence that dignify the day and that make us more sensitive to its prestige and sanctity. We use candles or oil, as this is the time-honored way of performing this ritual, and it links us with our Jewish ancestors from our storied past.

## NOTE

The instructions below only apply to lighting on the first night of *yom tov*. There are some important differences when lighting Shabbat candles on Friday night and *yom tov* candles on the second night of *yom tov*. For guidance, see the "Shabbat Candles" section in this booklet.

## WHEN?

- The proper time to light candles is before sunset, and the common custom is to do it eighteen minutes before sunset. This is the candle lighting time that appears on the back of this booklet for the first night of *yom tov*.
- If candles were not lit before this time, they should be lit during the eighteen minutes until sunset.
- If one did not light before sunset, one may light afterward, but only from an existing flame (like a gas range or *yahrzeit* candle). We may not create a new flame by striking a match, turning on a gas range, etc.

## WHO?

- The mitzvah of lighting candles applies to men and women. However, if there is a woman (over the age of bat mitzvah) in a home, she lights the candles for the household.
- The Lubavitcher Rebbe initiated a campaign encouraging every Jewish girl to light her own candle.

## WHAT?

- We use wax candles or oil for this mitzvah. The candles should be long enough, or the oil plentiful enough, to burn until nightfall, and ideally, until after the *yom tov* dinner.
- The mitzvah can technically be fulfilled by lighting a single candle. However, there are various customs about the number of candles to light. The established custom is for single girls and women to light one candle, and married women to light (at least) two.



- Many women have a custom of lighting one additional candle upon the birth of each child, increasing in light as the family grows.

#### WHERE?

- Set the candles on a metal tray in a location that is out of the reach of young children and clear of flammable objects.
- The candles should ideally be visible from the table on which the *yom tov* meal will be eaten, so that those enjoying their meal can benefit from their glow.

#### HOW?

- It is customary to light the candles while dressed in clothing that befit the holiday.
- It is appropriate to place some money in a charity box before lighting the candles (if they are being kindled before sunset).
- Light the candle(s).
- Do not extinguish the match, but let it burn down on the metal tray upon which the candles are standing.
- Circle your hands over the flames and toward yourself three times.
- Cover your eyes with your hands and recite two blessings, below. (When reading the Hebrew below, the appearance of ה' should be read as “*Ado-nai*.”)
- While your eyes are still covered, take a moment to pray silently for whatever your heart desires.
- Open your eyes and say “good *yom tov*” or “*chag same'ach* to anyone present.

בָּרוּךְ אַתָּה ה', אֱלֹהֵינוּ  
מִלְךְ הָעוֹלָם, אֲשֶׁר קִדְּשָׁנוּ  
בְּמִצְוֹתָיו, וְצִוָּנוּ לְהַדְלִיק  
נֵר שֶׁל יוֹם טוֹב:

בָּרוּךְ אַתָּה ה', אֱלֹהֵינוּ  
מִלְךְ הָעוֹלָם, שֶׁהֵחֵינּוּ וְקִיְּמָנוּ  
וְהִנִּיעָנוּ לְזִמְנֵי הַזֶּה:

*Baruch atah Ado-nai,  
Elo-heinu melech  
ha'olam, asher kidishanu  
bemitsvotav, vetsivanu  
lehadlik ner shel yom tov.*

*Baruch atah Ad-onai,  
Elo-heinu melech ha'olam,  
shehechyanu, vekiyemanu,  
vehigianu lizman hazeh.*

Blessed are You, L-rd our G-d, King of the universe, who has sanctified us with His commandments, and commanded us to kindle the *yom tov* light.

Blessed are You, L-rd our G-d, King of the universe, who has granted us life, sustained us, and enabled us to reach this occasion.



# Evening Prayer

Jewish prayer has two objectives:

Prayer's outer objective is the fulfillment of our needs. We turn to G-d when we are in need because we believe that G-d creates and provides on an ongoing basis. If we are stressed, we ask for calm. If we are lonely, we ask for friendship. If we are ailing, we ask for healing.

Prayer's inner objective is to build and nurture a relationship with G-d. G-d, as an omnipotent, omniscient, and infinite Creator, is removed from our limited frame of reference, rendering it difficult to consciously experience a relationship with Him. We use the words of prayer as a springboard to connect with Him, to contemplate His greatness, His love for us, His omnipresence, and to push ourselves toward spiritual growth.

On our holidays, when we focus more on the blessings that we have, rather than on the things we lack, the motif of our prayers is more aligned with the inner objective. This is why there are fewer individual requests in the standard liturgy and more articulation of our attempt to connect with G-d and become more conscious of Him by singing His praises.

## HOW?

Although throughout the year some have the custom to recite the evening prayers (*Arvit*) before nightfall, this should not be done on the

first night of Shavuot. This is because Shavuot begins after forty-nine days from the second day of Passover, and the Torah tells us that these days must be complete. Accordingly, we do not terminate the fifth day of Sivan early; rather, we allow it to run its course by waiting until nightfall to recite the evening prayers. To learn when nightfall is in your area, visit: [www.chabad.org/calendar/zmanim\\_cdo/jewish/Halachic-Times](http://www.chabad.org/calendar/zmanim_cdo/jewish/Halachic-Times)

The evening *Arvit* prayers begin on page 161 in the *Kehot Hebrew-English Siddur*.

The central prayer of this service is the *Shema*, pp. 163–164. The *Shema* occupies a central place in Judaism. Children are taught this prayer from the time they can speak. We say the *Shema* during the last, powerful moments of the Yom Kippur Ne'ilah service. These are, traditionally, the last words a person utters before passing on. These words accompany us from cradle to grave.

The *Shema* is preceded and followed by two blessings. Following this, we recite the holiday *Amidah*. This is the moment when we stop talking *about* G-d and begin to talk *to* G-d. It is a personal moment, an intimate moment with the Creator, which is why this prayer is recited silently. It begins on page 331 and ends on page 336. During the *Amidah*, be sure to insert the appropriate section for Shavuot.

# Holiday Kiddush

The *yom tov* meal begins with Kiddush, a verbal proclamation about the sanctity and uniqueness of the day. This liturgy is recited over a cup of wine in order to lend the occasion prominence.



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Kiddush, sanctification, can be said to be our overall aspiration in life. However, Judaism does not teach that holiness is achieved by abnegating the physical.

This is illustrated by the fact that, according to Jewish law, Kiddush is not valid unless it is immediately followed by a meal. The message for us is that our quest for holiness cannot be detached from physical experiences; we must pursue sanctity and transcendence, but this must influence and inform proper and wholesome physical living.

## PREPARING

- If one cannot drink wine, grape juice can be used as a substitute.
- The Kiddush cup should hold at least three fluid ounces.
- The custom is to use a fancy goblet designated for *mitzvot*.
- Two challahs should be present at the table under a cover.
- Hold the cup in your right (or dominant) hand.
- Glance at the Shabbos candles and take in the holiday light as you start reciting Kiddush.
- If there are others joining you for your meal, recite the Kiddush aloud, and all who wish to be included in your recitation of Kiddush should answer “Amen” after the three blessings are recited.

## HOW?

- Rise. Fill the cup with kosher wine (or grape juice), and then pour a bit more so that it overflows the brim.
- If you are fluent in reading Hebrew, recite the Kiddush in this holy tongue. Otherwise, recite the translation. (When reading the Hebrew on the next page, the appearance of ך should be read as “*Ado-nai*.”)

סְבִרֵי מְרַנָּן:

בְּרוּךְ אַתָּה ה', אֱלֹהֵינוּ מֶלֶךְ הָעוֹלָם,

בוֹרֵא פְרֵי הַגָּפֶן:

בְּרוּךְ אַתָּה ה' אֱלֹהֵינוּ מֶלֶךְ הָעוֹלָם,

אֲשֶׁר בָּחַר בָּנוּ מִכָּל עַם, וְרוֹמְמָנוּ

מִכָּל לְשׁוֹן, וְקִדְּשָׁנוּ בְּמִצְוֹתָיו. וְתַתֵּן

לָנוּ ה' אֱלֹהֵינוּ בְּאַהֲבָה, מוֹעֲדִים

לְשִׂמְחָה, חֲגִים וְזִמְנִים לְשִׂשׁוֹן, אֶת

יוֹם חַג הַשְּׁבוּעוֹת הַזֶּה, וְאֶת יוֹם טוֹב

מִקְרָא קֹדֶשׁ הַזֶּה, וְזִמן מִתֵּן תּוֹרָתְנוּ

מִקְרָא קֹדֶשׁ וְזִכָּר לִיציאת מצרים.

כִּי בָנוּ בְּחֵרְתָּ וְאוֹתָנוּ קִדְּשָׁתָּ מִכָּל

הָעַמִּים, וּמוֹעֲדֵי קֹדֶשׁ בְּשִׂמְחָה

וּבְשִׂשׁוֹן הִנְחַלְתָּנוּ: בְּרוּךְ אַתָּה ה',

מִקְרָא יִשְׂרָאֵל וְהִזְמִינִים:

בְּרוּךְ אַתָּה ה' אֱלֹהֵינוּ מֶלֶךְ הָעוֹלָם,

שֶׁהִחַיְנוּ וְקִיְּמָנוּ וְהִגִּיעָנוּ לְזִמְן הַזֶּה:

Attention gentlemen:

Blessed are You, L-rd, our G-d, King of the universe,  
who creates the fruit of the vine.

Blessed are You, G-d, our G-d, King of the universe,  
who has chosen us from among all people, and raised  
us above all tongues, and made us holy through His  
commandments. And You, G-d, our G-d, have given us  
in love festivals for happiness, feasts and festive seasons  
for rejoicing the day of this festival Shavuot and this  
festival of holy convocation, the season of the giving  
of the Torah, a holy convocation, commemorating the  
departure from Egypt. For You have chosen us and  
sanctified us from all the nations, and You have given  
us as a heritage Your holy festivals, in happiness and  
joy. Blessed are You, G-d, who sanctifies Israel and the  
festive seasons.

Blessed are You, G-d, our G-d, King of the universe,  
who has granted us life, sustained us, and enabled us  
to reach this occasion.

- After concluding the Kiddush, drink  
at least 1.5 ounces from the cup.
- It is customary to share a sip of the  
Kiddush wine with all who are present.

## The Festive Meal

After Kiddush, the first item that we eat at our *yom tov* meal is challah, the traditional loaves prepared especially for Shabbat and holidays. We use two whole challah loaves (or rolls) for our *yom tov* meals so that we can be reminded about the story of the manna.

When the Jewish people were in the desert, manna rained down from heaven each day. However, on Fridays, a double portion of manna fell, for that day and for the next, because it would have been improper for the Jews to collect the manna from the fields on Shabbat. Some sources indicate that a similar system was in place for the holidays: a double portion would fall on the day preceding *yom tov*. We commemorate this double portion of manna by serving a double portion of challah at the *yom tov* meal.

The story of the manna reminds us that just as G-d sustained us with manna in the desert, so does our modern-day sustenance come from G-d. We work hard to achieve financial success. We act, initiate, plan, and so forth; but ultimately, it is G-d who gives us the ability to produce and succeed. This was very evident with the manna, but the same is true today, albeit in a manner less apparent. This message is particularly important on *yom tov*, when we abstain from earning a living in order to tap into the sanctity of the day.

#### HOW?

- Before the Kiddush, place two whole and uncut loaves of challah on the table. (Whole rolls, matzah slices, or pita breads may also be used.)
- Cover the challah loaves until after the Kiddush is recited. Beautiful “challah covers” are available at Judaica stores and online for reasonable prices, but a cloth or napkin does the job as well.
- After the Kiddush, ritually wash your hands, and then recite *Al netilat yadayim*, below.
- Return to the table. “Unveil” the challah loaves, and lightly score the top of one of the challah loaves with a knife.
- Hold the bread, and recite the *Hamotzi* blessing, below.
- Slice the loaf that you scored, dip a piece of the bread in salt, and enjoy.
- After you take a piece for yourself, slice pieces of challah for all present.
- It is not necessary to eat both challah loaves; if only one is consumed, you can put the second one away for the next meal.

- After Kiddush and challah, proceed to eat a lavish *yom tov* meal. Try to mix in meaningful conversations, Jewish songs, and Torah thoughts. When you are finished the meal, recite Grace After Meals, which can be found in the *Kehot Hebrew-English Siddur* on p. 88.

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

*Baruch atah Ado-nai, Elo-heinu melech  
ha'olam, asher kidishanu bemitsvotav,  
vetsivanu al netilat yadayim.*

Blessed are you, L-rd our G-d, King of the universe, who has sanctified us with His commandments, and commanded us concerning the washing of the hands.

בָּרוּךְ אַתָּה ה', אֱלֹהֵינוּ מֶלֶךְ הָעוֹלָם,  
הַמוֹצֵיא לֶחֶם מִן הָאָרֶץ:

*Baruch atah Ado-nai, Elo-heinu melech  
ha'olam, hamotsi lechem min ha'arets.*

Blessed are You, L-rd our G-d, King of the universe, who brings forth bread from the earth.

# All Night Study

Our sages describe our receiving the Torah as a betrothal ceremony between G-d and His people. This is something we endeavor to reenact each year on Shavuot.

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In the hours leading up to her wedding, the bride's entourage beautifies and adorns her so that she will look her best at this most special moment of her life. Similarly, we want to spend the hours before we are betrothed anew to G-d adorning and beautifying ourselves spiritually. This is the origin of the custom to remain awake on the first night of the holiday and to use the time to study Torah, preparing for our spiritual encounter with G-d the next morning. This custom is often called *Tikun Leil Shavuot*, with the word *tikun* being a cognate of the Aramaic word *tikuna*, adornment. We adorn ourselves on the night (*leil*) of Shavuot.

Another explanation for this custom is that when G-d descended onto Sinai on Shavuot morning to give the Jews the Torah, they were still deep in a blissful sleep. To rectify their lack of preparedness, we remain awake on this night and study Torah. Indeed, the word *tikun* can also mean to "rectify."

The custom is to study until dawn. We realize, however, that any amount of Torah study on this

evening is a special mitzvah and will prepare us for receiving the Torah anew the next morning.

Many have the custom to read (amongst other things) the full Book of Ruth on this night. This relatively short biblical book tells the story of Ruth, a Moabite princess, who sacrificed a life of luxury to live as a poor and simple convert to Judaism. She suffered at first, but eventually merited to marry and raise a family. The Book of Ruth, after completing her poignant story, delineates how King David was her descendant.

This narrative is particularly relevant to Shavuot because King David was born and passed away on this holiday. Another point of relevance is the lengthy depiction in this book about the harvest in ancient Israel, which coincides with the season of Shavuot. Finally, Ruth is the quintessential convert. She embraced Judaism with all her heart and made great sacrifices to do so. As we all "renew our vows" with G-d on Shavuot, it is appropriate that we look to her as a source of inspiration for what we can give of ourselves and what we can become.



# Morning Prayer

The morning prayer (*Shacharit*) is compared to a ladder, for by means of the morning prayers, we ascend, one step at a time, from our default self-focused position to the very peak of spiritual heights.

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- The segment of *Birchot Hashachar* (pp. 5–9) is the first step of the prayer ladder. In it, we simply acknowledge G-d's transcendence and submit to Him, even as we have yet to develop feelings or understandings leading us to this conclusion. This theme is continued when we recite *Hodu* (p. 181).  
331–337). When we get to know G-d as something vastly greater than ourselves, once we become absorbed by G-d's infinite greatness, we surrender our self-awareness for a total focus on G-d. This is the feeling to which we aspire—and that our souls achieve—during the *Amidah*.
- The second step, *Pesukei Dezimrah* (pp. 191–202), is when we utter the Creator's praises in order to learn about G-d and to train ourselves to find Him within nature. This leads us to feel His closeness and to see the world that we inhabit with fresh lenses.
- Following the *Amidah*, we sing *Hallel* (pp. 307–311), unique praises of G-d from the Book of Psalms. Every day is a gift. Every breath is a miracle. We sing G-d's praises for these blessings every day. However, at times of joy and salvation, when we sense an extra measure of G-d's love and protection, we recite the unique *Hallel* praises in order to stimulate extra joy and feelings of gratitude.
- The third step, *Shema* and its blessings (pp. 203–210), is about developing an understanding that G-d is not just Creator of the world, but also an entity that transcends everything.
- Before *Musaf*, it is appropriate to read the Ten Commandments. See the next chapter. *Musaf* itself can be found on pp. 340–350.
- The next rung on the ladder, the highest rung, is the *Amidah* (pp.



# The Ten Commandments

The most pivotal moment of Shavuot is when the Ten Commandments are chanted aloud from the sacred Torah scroll on the first morning of the holiday. Indeed, each year, Jews around the world, young and old, flock to the synagogue to reenact this most essential moment of Jewish history—when G-d revealed Himself at Sinai and tasked the Jewish people with a sacred charge, to which we are dedicated ever so diligently until this very day.

Subsequent to this event, G-d engraved the commandments into two stone tablets, or *luchot*. The *luchot* are well-known and highly recognizable Jewish symbols. Since then, the moral messages of these commandments have been engraved in the hearts and minds of our people, and we commit ourselves on this day to ensure that this will continue in the future.

This year, when many of us are unable to be present when the Ten Commandments are read in the synagogue, we should take the time on Shavuot morning to read

this foundational text in our homes. If others are with you, gather them around and engage in a group reading.

What follows is the passage of the Ten Commandments, followed by an English translation, which, in turn, is followed by bits of commentary that can help deepen our appreciation for the meaning and relevance of these commandments. (If you wish to read the entire Sinai account, consult the *Kehot Hebrew-English Siddur*, pp. 20–522.)

וַיְדַבֵּר אֱלֹהִים אֶת כָּל הַדְּבָרִים הָאֵלֶּה לְאָמֹר:

אֲנֹכִי ה' אֱלֹהֶיךָ אֲשֶׁר הוֹצֵאתִיךָ מֵאֶרֶץ מִצְרַיִם מִבֵּית עַבְדִּים:

לֹא יִהְיֶה לְךָ אֱלֹהִים אֲחֵרִים עַל פָּנָי: לֹא תַעֲשֶׂה לְךָ פֶסֶל וְכָל תְּמוּנָה אֲשֶׁר בַּשָּׁמַיִם מִמַּעַל וְאֲשֶׁר בָּאֲרֶץ מִתַּחַת וְאֲשֶׁר בַּמַּיִם מִתַּחַת לָאָרֶץ: לֹא תִשְׁתַּחֲוֶה לָהֶם וְלֹא תַעֲבֹדֵם כִּי אֲנֹכִי ה' אֱלֹהֶיךָ אֵל קָנָא פֶקֶד עֵז אָבֹת עַל בְּנֵי עַל שְׁלֵשִׁים וְעַל רַבְעִים לְשָׁנָאִי: וַעֲשֵׂה חֶסֶד לְאֶלְפִים לְאֹהֲבֵי וּלְשֹׂמְרֵי מִצְוֹתַי:

לֹא תִשָּׂא אֶת שֵׁם ה' אֱלֹהֶיךָ לְשׁוּא כִּי לֹא יִנְקָה ה' אֶת אֲשֶׁר יִשָּׂא אֶת שְׁמוֹ לְשׁוּא:

זְכוֹר אֶת יוֹם הַשַּׁבָּת לְקֹדֶשׁוֹ: שֵׁשֶׁת יָמִים תַּעֲבֹד וַעֲשִׂיתָ כָּל מְלֹאכְתֶּךָ: וַיּוֹם הַשְּׁבִיעִי שַׁבָּת לַה' אֱלֹהֶיךָ, לֹא תַעֲשֶׂה כָּל מְלֹאכְתָּהּ, אֲתָהּ וּבִנְךָ וּבִתֶּךָ עַבְדְּךָ וְאִמָּתֶךָ וּבְהִמְתָּךְ וּגְרֶךָ אֲשֶׁר בְּשַׁעְרֶיךָ: כִּי שֵׁשֶׁת יָמִים עָשָׂה ה' אֶת הַשָּׁמַיִם וְאֶת הָאָרֶץ אֶת הַיָּם וְאֶת כָּל אֲשֶׁר בָּם וַיָּנַח בַּיּוֹם הַשְּׁבִיעִי עַל פֶּן בְּרַךְ ה' אֶת יוֹם הַשַּׁבָּת וַיְקַדְּשֵׁהוּ: כִּבְדֹּר אֶת אָבִיךָ וְאֶת אִמָּךְ לְמַעַן יֵאָרְכוּן יָמֶיךָ עַל הָאֲדָמָה אֲשֶׁר ה' אֱלֹהֶיךָ נָתַן לְךָ:

לֹא תִרְצַח:

לֹא תִנְאָף:

לֹא תִגְנוֹב:

לֹא תַעֲנֶה בְרַעְיָךְ עַד שִׁקֵּר:

לֹא תִחְמַד בֵּית רַעְיָךְ לֹא תִחְמַד אִשְׁתֵּךְ וְעַבְדְּךָ וְאִמָּתְךָ וְשׂוֹרוֹ וְחִמּוֹרוֹ וְכָל אֲשֶׁר לְרַעְיָךְ:

*G-d spoke all these words, saying:*

1. I am the L-rd, your G-d, who brought you out of the land of Egypt, from the house of slaves.
2. You must not have any other gods before My Presence. You must not make for yourself any carved image or picture of anything that is in the heaven above, or on the earth below, or in the water below the earth. You must not prostrate yourself to them, and you must not worship them. For I, the L-rd your G-d, demand exclusive worship. Where My enemies are concerned, I am cognizant of the sins of fathers for [their] children, to the third and fourth [generations]. But I do [acts of] loving kindness for thousands [of generations] to those who love Me and preserve My commandments.
3. Do not take the Name of the L-rd, your G-d in vain. For the L-rd will not acquit the one who takes His Name in vain.
4. Remember the Shabbat day to sanctify it. You may labor for six days, and do all your work. But the seventh day is Shabbos to the L-rd, your G-d. You must not do any manner of work—you, your son, your daughter, your slave, your maid, your animal, and the foreigner within your gates. For in six days the L-rd made the heaven and the earth, the sea and all that is in them, and He rested on the seventh day. Therefore, the L-rd blessed the Shabbat and made it holy.
5. Honor your father and your mother so that your days may be lengthened upon the land that the L-rd your G-d is giving you.
6. Do not commit murder.
7. Do not commit adultery.
8. Do not steal.
9. Do not testify as a false witness against your neighbor.
10. Do not covet your neighbor's house. Do not covet your neighbor's wife, his slave, his maid, his ox, his donkey, or anything else that belongs to your neighbor.

## COMMENTARY

# 1

This commandment offers us an opportunity to explore the idea of G-d's continuous governance of creation. There are those who assume that G-d has better things to do than deal with our world, so, they say, He created it but is now indifferent

to it. The Exodus asks us to consider that G-d is intimately involved in history, evidenced by the fact that He freed the Jews from the Egyptian bondage.

This commandment also offers an opportunity to reflect on our Jewish purpose: if a nation was miraculously taken out of the clutches of slavery, we must ask, "Why? What purpose does this nation have? What can I do to advance this purpose?"

In addition, the memory of the Exodus inspires us to realize that G-d will do His part to ensure that we will be redeemed from our own varieties of Egypt. It also encourages us to endeavor to transcend our own metaphorical bondages that we encounter in life—whether internal or external—that disallow growth and the realizing of our true potential.

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# 2

This commandment prompts us to think about the relationship between G-d and morality.

For an authority to dictate absolute moral imperatives to human beings, it must be (a) the exclusive authority over all of existence and, therefore, "entitled" to dictate right and wrong; (b) an entity that is moral; and (c) interested in and concerned with how humanity conducts itself.

However, before the Torah was given, every religion and culture worshiped multiple gods, which meant that there was no absolute authority for right or wrong. Each god had its own agenda, and therefore, the idea of many gods inevitably

engendered a multiplicity of moral standards. It was also widely believed that many of the gods were whimsical and not essentially just, and that they were preponderantly indifferent to humanity.

The second commandment conveys that G-d is the sole authority over the universe, and His rules are thus unconditionally binding. It also teaches that G-d is essentially just, and that He is very concerned with the behavior of humanity.

Once we know this, we realize that we lack the authority to move the needle on moral standards. This impels us to hold strong against immoral temptations, rather than seek ingenious theories to justify acting on them.

# 3

This commandment primarily forbids false and trivial oaths. However, it also prohibits all unnecessary use of G-d's name. Our relationship with G-d is meant to be intimate and personal, but we must never lose perspective—He's our Creator, and we need to relate to Him in that fashion.

# 4

Six days a week, we are completely engrossed in working, producing, achieving—doing exactly what we were put on earth to do. Nevertheless, there is an occupational hazard involved. When we are in a mode of creating, it is hard to think of ourselves as created beings. When we see the success of our hands, it is easy to forget the One who gave us all the talents and resources we utilize to achieve success.

Once a week, therefore, we stop being creators and take time to focus on the fact that we are created. This recognition is expressed by dedicating one day each week to refrain from any activity that signifies human power over nature. On this day, we renounce every exercise of intelligent, purposeful control over nature in order to proclaim G-d as the Source of all power.

# 5

The Ten Commandments were engraved on two tablets. The five commandments etched on the first tablet deal with the human's relationship with G-d; the second tablet contains five commandments that concern interpersonal matters. But why is the fifth commandment, about honoring parents, included in the first category? Doesn't this command belong on the second tablet?

One explanation: A lack of gratitude to our parents ultimately begets a lack of gratitude toward G-d; an arrogant unwillingness to acknowledge one's dependence upon others

begets an inability to acknowledge one's dependence on G-d. On the other hand, when we learn to honor our parents by integrating into our natures the character trait of gratitude, we will also come to acknowledge and appreciate the goodness of G-d, who is the ultimate cause of our existence.

A second explanation: Judaism has survived to this day because Jewish children have been attentive to their fathers and mothers and the latter willingly and patiently demonstrated and explained how to live as a Jew. However, we can only accept the traditions that we receive from our ancestors if we have an attitude of respect and reverence toward them. Thus, our connection to G-d runs through the honoring of our parents.

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# 6

Although this and some of the following prohibitions are admonitions against egregious sins that most of us wouldn't consider committing, these prohibitions have subtle undertones that are applicable to every person.

Murder is a result of one person's deeming another person totally insignificant. In truth, every human was created by G-d in His holy image, and therefore has an innate right to exist. We must internalize the value of respecting every individual. G-d thinks this person is important, so should you.



# 7

It is natural for people concerned with the religious ideal to assume that the body and its desires impose a barrier between the individual and G-d. To become closer to G-d, it is often assumed, means to become alienated as much as possible from one's body and bodily functions—first and foremost, from the powerful sexual drive.

Judaism views things differently. We do not aspire to be like angels. We don't seek to escape from the world; we seek to infuse it with meaning and holiness. G-d wishes to be present in our lives, in our world.

To this end, Judaism presents a roadmap for how to introduce sanctity into the sexual sphere of life. First and foremost, sexual intimacy ought to be an act of complete intimacy and unity, of authentic harmony, not only physically, but also cognitively and emotionally. This can take place when intimacy is between husband and wife in the context of a loving, faithful, and enduring marriage.

# 9

We are constantly observing our acquaintances and friends, judging their every word and action. We must be wary of a tendency to "bear false witness" in the process of issuing our personal verdict. We must always give the benefit of the doubt, taking into consideration various factors of which we may be unaware, ensuring that we don't reach an erroneous judgment.

# 8

The sages teach that this commandment is primarily a commandment against kidnapping. However, it also forbids all sorts of dishonesty.

The essence of kidnapping is utilizing another human being for personal gain. Thus, a message with broad relevance emerges: focus on being a real friend; don't be in the relationship only for your own benefit. Be there for your friend even when it is uncomfortable or inconvenient for you.

# 10

Many people wonder about this commandment: How are we not to covet that which we find desirable? The answer is that human beings covet things they think they deserve. We aren't jealous of the bird's capacity for flying or the Queen's ability to enter Buckingham Palace at will. We know that these are way out of our league, and so it doesn't even cross our minds to covet them.

G-d created each individual with a specific purpose. G-d also provides a unique bundle of gifts and opportunities for each person, in accordance with each person's individual mission. What you have is your personal toolset that will enable you to accomplish what you were created for. From that perspective, the opportunities that others have is as remote and irrelevant to us as the bird's ability to fly. If we cultivate this mindset, we can be happy, rather than envious, for our neighbor's good fortune.



SHAVUOT RECIPE

## Ice Cream in a Bag

Serves 1 child

### Ingredients

½ Cup Milk  
½ Tsp. Vanilla  
1 Tbsp. Sugar

4 Cups Ice  
4 Tbsp. Kosher Salt

### Supplies

1 Sandwich Size Ziploc Bag  
1 Large Freezer Ziploc Bag

### Optional

A hand towel to keep fingers from getting too cold!

### Instructions

#### Step 1:

In a small resealable plastic bag, combine the milk, sugar, and vanilla. Push out extra air and seal.

#### Step 2:

Open the large resealable plastic bag and put in the ice and salt. Place the small bag inside the bigger bag and seal it. Then, shake the bag very well, but carefully, for about 3-5 minutes, until the ice cream has hardened.

#### Step 3:

Remove from bag and enjoy with your favorite ice cream toppings.

## THE 10 COMMANDMENTS

On the morning of the 6th of Sivan, the Jewish people were camped at the foot of Mount Sinai. They woke up to thunder and lightning, a loud, powerful shofar blast, and a thick cloud at the top of the mountain. Trembling in awe, they gathered at the foot of the mountain as Moshe went up, alone, to the top. Against this incredible backdrop, G-d announced the Ten Commandments. The Jewish people had just received the most precious gift from G-d, the Torah.

On Shavuot, G-d gives us the Torah all over again. We hear the Ten Commandments, and it's as if we are receiving the Torah for the very first time. This year, when we can't hear them in synagogue, we'll read the Ten Commandments at home with our families. Take a deep breath, because you're about to receive a gift that will change your life!



**Stand up and imagine yourself at Sinai, getting ready to receive the Torah. Close your eyes and take a deep breath. Open your eyes and read the 10 commandments out loud. Invite your mom, dad, brother or sister to join and listen.**



אַנְכִי ה' אֱלֹהִים  
**G-d is the only G-d.**

I believe that G-d, and only G-d, created the world.



לֹא יִהְיֶה לְךָ אֱלֹהִים אֲחֵרִים עַל פְּנֵי  
**Don't make or serve idols.**

I only put my trust in G-d. I do not worship anything else, like money, fame, sports, or fashion.



לֹא תִשָּׂא אֶת שֵׁם ה' אֱלֹהֶיךָ לְשׁוֹן  
**Do not use G-d's name in vain.**

I use my words carefully. G-d's name is holy. I must make sure not to use it falsely or unnecessarily.



זְכוֹר אֶת יוֹם הַשַּׁבָּת לְקַדְּשׁוֹ  
**Keep the Sabbath holy.**

At the end of each week, I take a pause to rest, pray, and think about my relationship with G-d.



כְּבֹד אֶת אָבִיךָ וְאֶת אִמֶּךָ  
**Honor your parents.**

I respect and appreciate my parents and elders.



לֹא תִרְצַח  
**Don't kill.**

I do not embarrass, insult, or hurt anyone in any way.



לֹא תִנָּאֵף  
**Do not act unfaithfully in marriage**

I am trustworthy and loyal to my family and friends.



לֹא תִגְנוֹב  
**Don't steal.**

I respect the property and rights of others.



לֹא תַעֲנֶה בְרַעַף עַד שִׁקֵּר  
**Don't be a false witness.**

I am always honest and truthful.

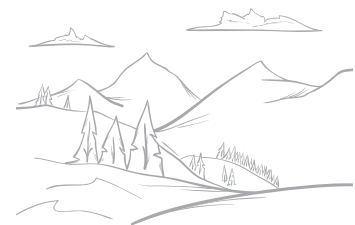


לֹא תַחְמֹד  
**Don't be jealous.**

I am happy with all that I have, and who I am.




## WHERE IS THE BEST PLACE TO GIVE THE TORAH?


G-d wanted to give the Torah on a mountain, to teach us to stand tall, like a mountain, and be proud of our Jewish identity. But G-d didn't choose the biggest mountain as the special place for giving the Torah. G-d chose Mount Sinai, even though it was smaller than surrounding mountains. G-d wanted to teach us the power of being humble. Even as we stand tall and proud to be Jewish, we must always remember that our talents are gifts from G-d.



MOUNT SINAI

The entire Jewish nation, close to 3 million people, were gathered at  waiting for the most amazing event ever! G-d was going to speak to them and give them His .



But wait!  G-d had a serious concern; “I have been waiting over 2,400 years to give my most precious  to a worthy nation. How can I be sure that the Jewish people will continue keeping the  in the future?”



G-d told the Jewish people “Provide Me with a guarantee that my  will be kept and cherished forever. Give Me an acceptable guarantor and then I will give you the Torah!”





With confidence the Jews answered, “Our amazing forefathers, Avraham, Yitzchak, and Yaakov, will be our guarantors!”

G-d was not satisfied. “They were no longer alive, how could they be guarantors?”

Then the people said, “Our prophets will be our guarantors!”

G-d was still not satisfied. “Even great leaders can't guarantee the future.” Finally the Jews said, “Our  will be our guarantors! We promise to teach our children  in a way that they will teach their children! They will be our guarantors!”

Now, G-d was finally . “The children are sure to be good guarantors. Because of them, I will give you the Torah!” G-d knew that He could count on the Jewish boys and girls to make sure the Jewish people would  the Torah, learn it, and do its holy Mitzvahs.

It's through Jewish children learning and following the Torah, that will ensure that the  will never be forgotten. They will pass the Torah on to their children, and they to their children, and on, and on forever. You are part of a golden  going all the way back over 3,000 years to when the Torah was given! It's up to you to make sure that the golden chain of Judaism continues to be passed down to the next generation. Your  and teachers have been teaching you  and Mitzvot and in the future you will be able to teach your children and continue that special chain.



# Shabbat Candles

**T**onight, the second night of *yom tov*, we light candles for two reasons: because it is the second night of *yom tov* and because it is Shabbat. Most of the process is similar to the kindling of the previous evening. The following mentions some points of difference:

- The time to light candles is before sunset, and the common custom is to do it eighteen minutes before sunset. This is the candle lighting time that appears on the back of this booklet for the second night of *yom tov*. If candles were not lit before this time,

they should be lit during the eighteen minutes until sunset. If one did not light before sunset, one may not light afterward because one may not do so on Shabbat.

- Do not strike a match to generate a new flame. Light the candles from a pre-existing flame that was kindled before *yom tov* (like a *yahrzeit* candle).
- Recite two blessings, like on the previous night, but there's a small difference in the first blessing. Here are both blessings to recite:

בְּרוּךְ אַתָּה ה', אֱלֹהֵינוּ מֶלֶךְ הָעוֹלָם, אֲשֶׁר קִדְּשָׁנוּ  
בְּמִצְוֹתָיו, וְצִוָּנוּ לְהַדְלִיק נֵר שֶׁל שַׁבָּת וְשֶׁל יוֹם טוֹב.

בְּרוּךְ אַתָּה ה', אֱלֹהֵינוּ מֶלֶךְ הָעוֹלָם,  
שֶׁהֵחֵינּוּ וְקִיַּמְנוּ וְהִגִּיעָנוּ לְזִמְן הַזֶּה.

*Baruch atah Ado-nai, Elo-heinu melech ha'olam, asher kidishanu  
bemitsvotav, vetsivanu lehadlik ner shel Shabbat veshel yom tov.*

*Baruch atah Ado-nai, Elo-heinu melech ha'olam,  
shehechyanu, vekiyemanu, vehigianu lizman hazeh.*

Blessed are You, L-rd our G-d, King of the universe, who has sanctified us with His commandments, and commanded us to kindle the light of the holy Shabbat and *yom tov*.

Blessed are You, L-rd our G-d, King of the universe, who has granted us life, sustained us, and enabled us to reach this occasion.



## Shabbat Kiddush

Something is objectively different about the days of *yom tov*. A unique energy is present in the world on each holiday, and we are able to access it by observing the holiday's laws and customs.

The Land of Israel, a land that G-d seeks, a land close to G-dliness, a land of a lofty and pure nature, can receive this illumination in one day. In the Diaspora, however, one day is not sufficient. We require two days to receive what Israel can receive in one.

Therefore, as we begin the second night of *yom tov*, it is important to remind ourselves that we are not going through the motions of yesterday. Spirituality

takes time. Connection takes time. The second day of *yom tov* enables us to assimilate the holiday energies that are available to us during this special time.

The evening prayers of the second night are largely the same as the prayers of the first night. However, we first recite *Kabbalat Shabbat*, starting on p. 156. We also add during the Amidah various references to Shabbat.

The festive meal is also similar to the meal of the previous evening. One key difference is that the liturgy for Kiddush has an added paragraph and additional words and phrases. As such, the entire Kiddush for the second night is reproduced on the following page.



יום הששי: ויכלו השמים והארץ וכל צבאם:

ויכל אלהים ביום השביעי מלאכתו אשר עשה, וישבת ביום השביעי מפל  
מלאכתו אשר עשה:

ויברך אלהים את יום השביעי ויקדש אתו, כי בו שבת מפל מלאכתו  
אשר ברא אלהים לעשות:

סברי מרגן:

ברוך אתה ה', אלהינו מלך העולם, בורא פרי הגפן:

ברוך אתה ה', אלהינו מלך העולם, אשר בחר בנו מפל עם, ורוממנו מפל  
לשון, וקדשנו במצותיו. ותתן לנו ה' אלהינו באהבה, שבתות למנוחה  
ומועדים לשמחה, חגים וזמנים לששון, את יום השבת הזה, ואת יום חג  
השבועות הזה, ואת יום טוב מקרא קדש הזה, וזמן מתן תורתנו באהבה  
מקרא קדש וזמן ליציאת מצרים. כי בנו בחרת ואותנו קדשת מפל העמים,  
ושבת ומועדי קדש באהבה וברצון בשמחה ובששון הנחלתנו. ברוך  
אתה ה', מקדש השבת וישראל והזמנים:

ברוך אתה ה', אלהינו מלך העולם, שהחיינו וקיימנו והגיענו לזמן הזה:

The Sixth Day. Now the heavens and the earth were completed and all their host.

And G-d completed on the seventh day His work that He did, and He abstained on the seventh day from all His work that He did. And G-d blessed the seventh day and He hallowed it, for thereon He abstained from all His work that G-d created to do.

Attention gentlemen:

Blessed are You, L-rd, our G-d, King of the universe, who creates the fruit of the vine.

Blessed are You, G-d, our G-d, King of the universe, who has chosen us from among all people, and raised us above all tongues, and made us holy through His commandments. And You, G-d, our G-d, have given us in love Shabbat for resting and festivals for happiness, feasts and festive seasons for rejoicing, the day of this Shabbat, and the day of this festival Shavuot, and this festival of holy convocation, the season of the giving of the Torah, with love—a holy convocation, commemorating the departure from Egypt. For You have chosen us and sanctified us from all the nations, and You have given us as a heritage Shabbat and Your holy festivals, in love, desire, happiness and joy. Blessed are You, G-d, who sanctifies Shabbat, Israel, and the festive seasons.

Blessed are You, G-d, our G-d, King of the universe, who has granted us life, sustained us, and enabled us to reach this occasion.



# Yizkor

The prayers for the second day of the holiday mirror those of the first, with the requisite additions for Shabbat. One significant difference is the recitation of *Yizkor* on the second morning of Shavuot. *Yizkor*, a special memorial prayer for the departed, is recited four times a year. The fourth and final time of each year is the second day of Shavuot.

The word “*Yizkor*” means “Remember.” It is the first word of the prayer and also represents its overall theme. In this prayer, we beseech G-d to remember favorably the souls of our relatives who have passed on in the merit of the charity that we will give in their honor.

It is preferable to recite *Yizkor* in a congregational setting because of the special power of congregational prayer and the presence of the Torah scrolls. Nevertheless, when it is not possible to attend services, *Yizkor* can be recited at home.

Our sages tell us that there are certain spiritually elevated times when G-d is “extra near,” and consequently, the prayers of an individual are as powerful as communal prayers. When we are deprived of the ability to pray in a communal setting, it is safe to assume that we are in one of those special periods when heartfelt prayers recited in solitude are as effective as those recited with the congregation.

## WHY?

Paradise is not a monolithic world but one comprised of myriad dimensions and levels.

The soul’s entry point in the Afterlife is shaped by its actions in this world—the spiritual revelations it effected through the many *mitzvot* it performed and the spiritual sensitivity it developed while enclothed in a physical body. It is true that the soul is in a state of progressive elevation to higher levels and deeper experiences, but all of it is based on, and therefore limited by, the actions it took while alive in the physical world.

There is, however, an intervention that enables us to positively influence what happens to a soul in the Afterlife. Good deeds performed in the memory of the deceased are credited to them and give their soul a new independent elevation.

This results from the fact that while the Afterlife, also known as Gan Eden or Paradise, is a most *pleasurable* realm, it is not the most *important* realm; with all of its deficiencies, our physical world is of greater importance. Only here is it possible to perform a mitzvah that affects both the physical and spiritual realms and fulfills the purpose of Creation.

The ability to perform *mitzvot* is what the soul lacks in the Afterlife, and our performance of them on its behalf is the most potent way to elevate a soul. Souls gain additional merit if their memory spur their loved ones to improve their ways. This is especially true regarding *mitzvot* done by children on behalf of their departed parents.

This is the function of *Yizkor*, where we pledge to give *tzedakah* in honor of our departed parents

and loved ones, and thereby bring merit to their souls and facilitate their elevation to higher and greater levels in the hereafter. By pledging to give charity—and following up on that pledge after the conclusion of the holiday—we are performing a positive physical deed in this world, something that the departed can no longer do.

#### HOW?

- *Yizkor* is customarily recited only by those who have at least one deceased parent.
- After reciting the morning (*Shacharit*) prayers, take a moment to meditate and emotionally connect with the loved ones in your life who have passed away.
- When *Yizkor* is recited at shul, all those who are lucky enough to have both parents alive depart the sanctuary for the duration of *Yizkor*. This can be implemented at home as well.
- Identify which passage of *Yizkor* is appropriate for you (depending on whether you are reciting it for a father, mother, etc.). Then recite the text, which appears below.
- If you wish, you can say the *Kel malei rachamim* prayer. (In the *Kehot Hebrew-English Siddur*, it appears on p. 466.)
- Then we recite the *Av harachamim* prayer, wherein we ask G-d to remember the countless martyrs who lovingly gave their lives to sanctify G-d's name (*Siddur*, p. 338).
- Take another moment to contemplate your connection with your loved ones and the immense gratification they are feeling at this moment—for you are lovingly remembering them and pledging to charity in their behalf. Bask in the newly strengthened relationship!
- Remember after the holiday to make good on your pledge.

Whenever the name of a deceased is mentioned in the *Yizkor* service, it is given in the following form: the Hebrew name of the deceased following by בן, son of — or, בת, daughter of — and then the deceased's Mother's Hebrew name.

#### FOR ONE'S FATHER

יְזַכֵּר אֱלֹהִים נְשָׁמוֹת אֲבָא מוֹרֵי (name of the deceased and that of his mother) שְׁחָלְדָּהּ  
 לְעוֹלָמוֹ, בְּעִבּוֹר שְׁבִלֵי נֶדֶר אֶתֶן צְדָקָה בְּעֵדוֹ, בְּשֹׁכֵר זֶה תִּהְיֶה נִפְשׁוֹ צְרוּרָה  
 בְּצִרוּר הַחַיִּים, עִם נְשָׁמוֹת אֲבִרְהֵם יִצְחָק וַיְעֻקֵּב, שָׂרָה רַבֵּקָה רָחֵל וְלֵאָה,  
 וְעִם שְׂאֵר צְדִיקִים וְצַדִּיקוֹת שְׁבִנְיַן עֵדֶן, וְנֹאמַר: אָמֵן:

May G-d remember the soul of my father, my teacher, (name of the deceased and that of his mother) who has gone onto his world, because, without making a vow, I shall give to charity on his behalf. As reward for this, may his soul be bound in the Bond of Life, together with the souls of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob; Sarah, Rebecca, Rachel, and Leah; and together with the other righteous men and women in the Garden of Eden. Now let us respond: Amen.

## FOR ONE'S MOTHER

יְזוּר אֱלֹהִים נַשְׁמַת אִמִּי מוֹרְתִי *(name of the deceased and that of her mother)*  
שְׁחַלְכָה לְעוֹלָמָהּ, בְּעִבּוֹר שְׁפָלִי נָדָר אֶתֶן צְדָקָה בְּעֶדְתָּהּ, בְּשֹׁכֵר זֶה תִּהְיֶה  
נַפְשָׁהּ צְרוּרָה בְּצִרוּר הַחַיִּים, עִם נַשְׁמוֹת אַבְרָהָם יִצְחָק וְיַעֲקֹב, שָׂרָה רִבְקָה  
רָחֵל וְלֵאָה, וְעִם שְׂאֵר צְדִיקִים וְצְדִיקָנוֹת שְׁבַגְנֵי עֵדֶן, וְנֹאמַר: אָמֵן:

May G-d remember the soul of my Mother, my teacher, (name of the deceased and that of her mother) who has gone on to her world, because, without making a vow, I shall give to charity on her behalf. As reward for this, May her soul be bound in the Bond of Life, together with the souls of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob; Sarah, Rebecca, Rachel, and Leah; and together with the other righteous men and women in the Garden of Eden. Now let us respond: Amen.

## FOR A MALE RELATIVE

husband      son      brother      uncle      grandfather  
יְזוּר אֱלֹהִים נַשְׁמַת זְקֵנִי | דוּדִי | אַחִי | בְּנִי | בַּעְלִי  
*(name of the deceased and that of his mother)*  
אֶתֶן צְדָקָה בְּעֵדוֹ, בְּשֹׁכֵר זֶה תִּהְיֶה נַפְשׁוֹ צְרוּרָה בְּצִרוּר הַחַיִּים, עִם נַשְׁמוֹת  
אַבְרָהָם יִצְחָק וְיַעֲקֹב, שָׂרָה רִבְקָה רָחֵל וְלֵאָה, וְעִם שְׂאֵר צְדִיקִים וְצְדִיקָנוֹת  
שְׁבַגְנֵי עֵדֶן, וְנֹאמַר: אָמֵן:

May God remember the soul of my grandfather/uncle/brother/son/husband (name of the deceased and that of his mother) who has gone on to his world, because, without making a vow, I shall give to charity on his behalf. As reward for this, may his soul be bound in the Bond of Life, together with the souls of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob; Sarah, Rebecca, Rachel, and Leah; and together with the other righteous men and women in the Garden of Eden. Now let us respond: Amen.

## FOR A FEMALE RELATIVE

wife      daughter      sister      aunt      grandmother  
יְזוּר אֱלֹהִים נַשְׁמַת זְקֵנָתִי | דוּדָתִי | אֲחוֹתִי | בָּתִּי | אִשְׁתִּי  
*(name of the deceased and that of her mother)*  
אֶתֶן צְדָקָה בְּעֶדְתָּהּ, בְּשֹׁכֵר זֶה תִּהְיֶה נַפְשָׁהּ צְרוּרָה בְּצִרוּר הַחַיִּים, עִם נַשְׁמוֹת  
אַבְרָהָם יִצְחָק וְיַעֲקֹב, שָׂרָה רִבְקָה רָחֵל וְלֵאָה, וְעִם שְׂאֵר צְדִיקִים וְצְדִיקָנוֹת  
שְׁבַגְנֵי עֵדֶן, וְנֹאמַר: אָמֵן:


May G-d remember the soul of my grandmother/aunt/sister/daughter/wife (name of the deceased and that of her mother) who has gone on to her world because, without making a vow, I shall give to charity on her behalf. As reward for this, may her soul be bound in the Bond of Life, together with the souls of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob; Sarah, Rebecca, Rachel, and Leah; and together with the other righteous men and women in the Garden of Eden. Now let us respond: Amen.

#### FOR ONE'S EXTENDED FAMILY

יִזְכֹּר אֱלֹהִים נְשָׁמוֹת זְקֵנֵי וְזִקְנוֹתַי, הוֹדֵי וְהוֹדוֹתַי, אַחֵי וְאַחֵיוֹתַי, הֵן מֵצֵד  
אָבִי, הֵן מֵצֵד אִמִּי, שֶׁחָלְכוּ לְעוֹלָמָם, בְּעֵבוֹר שְׂבֻלֵי נֶדֶר אֶתֵּן צְדָקָה בְּעַדָּם,  
בְּשֹׁכֵר זֶה תִּתְּיֶנָּה נַפְשׁוֹתֵיהֶם צְרוּרוֹת בְּצִרוּר הַחַיִּים, עִם נְשָׁמוֹת אַבְרָהָם  
יִצְחָק וְיַעֲקֹב, שָׂרָה רַבֵּקָה רָחֵל וְלֵאָה, וְעִם שְׂאֵר צְדִיקִים וְצַדִּיקוֹת שְׂבִנֵּן  
עַד, וְנֹאמֵר: אָמֵן:

May G-d remember the souls of my grandfathers and grandmothers, uncles and aunts, brothers and sisters both on my father's side and on my mother's side, who went on to their world, because, without making a vow, I shall give to charity on their behalf. As reward for this, may their souls be bound in the Bond of Life, together with the souls of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob; Sarah, Rebecca, Rachel, and Leah; and together with the other righteous men and women in the Garden of Eden.

Now let us respond: Amen.



Join us for a reading of the  
**10 Commandments  
& Yizkor Service**  
on Friday, March 29

Visit [ChabadJewishLife.org/tentablets](https://ChabadJewishLife.org/tentablets)  
for more info, time slots and to register.  
Social distance rules will apply.

*Wishing you a meaningful  
& joyous Shavuot!*

From Rabbi Shimon & Chanie Kramer  
2174 Hewlett Ave, suite 100, Merrick, NY 11566  
[ChabadJewishLife.org](https://ChabadJewishLife.org) - 516-833-3057



**CANDLE LIGHTING TIMES FOR  
MERRICK-BELLMORE-WANTAGH**

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1st Night of Shavuot

Thursday, May 28, 2020 7:58 PM

2nd Night of Shavuot and Shabbat

Friday May 29, 2020 7:59 PM

The holiday and Shabbat end at 9:07 PM