



# בס"ד Laws & Customs: Sivan & Shavuos

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## 🌸 SIVAN

*Tachnun* is not recited from *Rosh Chodesh Sivan* until after the twelfth day of *Sivan*. One should not undertake a fast on these days, even for a *Yohrtzeit*. [However, a *Chosson* and *Kallah* fast on their wedding day, unless their wedding occurs on the day after *Shavuos*.]

Many customs of mourning associated with *Sefirah Haomer* no longer apply from the first morning of the *Shloshes Y'mei Hagboloh* (i.e. Thursday). Music, dancing, and weddings are permissible. Nevertheless, one shouldn't take a haircut until *Erev Shabbos*.

## 🌸 YOM TOV PREPARATIONS

The *Mitzvah* of *V'Samechta B'Chagecha* on *Yom Tov* entails eating meat, wine and delicacies; providing new clothing or jewellery for one's wife according to his means; and giving sweets to the children. These should be arranged in advance.

Prior to every *Yom Tov*, the Rebbe emphasized that the *Yom Tov* requirements of the needy be met. *Yom Tov* is also an especially appropriate time to host guests.

One should make spiritual preparations for *Shavuos* as well. These include learning *Torah* – especially the laws of *Shavuos* and topics related to *Matan Torah*, as well as increasing in *Ahavas Yisroel*.

During the period before *Yom Tov*, one should reach out and do all within his or her power to ensure that all Jews – men, women, children and even small babies – should attend the *Aseres Hadibros* on the first day of *Shavuos*.

## 🌸 EREV SHABBOS (4<sup>TH</sup> SIVAN)

It is appropriate to take a haircut in honour of *Shavuos*, but not before *Erev Shabbos* (from *Tzeis* on Thursday).

If applicable, one's nails should be cut in honour of *Yom Tov*.

One immerses in a *Mikvah* after midday, to prepare for *Shabbos* and *Yom Tov*.

On *Erev Shabbos*, it is preferable to avoid beginning a full meal once the tenth *Halachic* hour of the day begins (2:43pm), in order to properly enjoy the *Shabbos* meal at night. However, one may snack in small quantities.

One should arrange a pre-existing flame from which to light the candles on the first and second nights of *Shavuos*.

Prior to candle-lighting, one should give *Tzedakah* on *Erev Shabbos* for the following three days; *Shabbos* and the two days of *Yom Tov*.

*Shavuos* is an opportune time to enhance one's *Torah* learning and make positive resolutions – without hindrance from the *Satan* – to increase (quantitatively as well as qualitatively) in one's private and public *Shiurim* of both *Nigleh* and *Chassidus*; to spread *Torah* to others; to enhance one's adherence to the daily study of *Chitas* and *Rambam*; and to accept upon oneself the *Ol Shel Torah* (yoke of *Torah*).

The Rebbe's customary *Shavuos* greeting: "*Kabbolas Hatorah B'Simcha ub'Pnimiyus*" – loosely translated as: "May you receive the *Torah* joyfully and internally".

## 🌸 FLOWERS AND FOLIAGE

*Shulchan Oruch* mentions the custom of decorating the *Shule* with trees (since *Shavuos* is the day of judgement for fruits), and flowers (to commemorate the foliage that appeared on barren *Har Sinai*). For various reasons, it is not our custom to decorate *Shule* with trees and flowers, but this may be done at home.

Flowers and decorative leaves or branches which were cut and arranged prior to *Shabbos* are regarded as a decoration and are not *Muktzeh*. Therefore, when necessary, they may be moved on *Shabbos* and *Shavuos*. However, if some of the flowers are not yet in full bloom and exposure to additional moisture will induce them to blossom further, the vase must be moved very gently so that the water level remains constant.

When all flowers are already in full bloom and exposure to additional moisture will not induce them to blossom further, the following further leniencies apply:

- On *Shabbos* and *Shavuos*, one may take flowers out of the vase of water. One may also return the flowers to the same vase, as long as the original water was not changed.
- On *Shabbos* and *Shavuos*, one may place the flowers in a new vase that was prepared and filled with water before *Shabbos*. One may also add flowers to a vase which already has flowers from before *Shabbos*.
- On *Shavuos* (but not on *Shabbos*), one may top up the water in the vase if necessary, but the ratio of the new water must be less than half of the total. One may certainly not replace the existing water.

Since it is forbidden to prepare for *Yom-Tov* on *Shabbos*, one should not arrange or move the flowers on *Shabbos* purely for the sake of *Yom-Tov*.

A potted plant should not be moved due to two concerns – *Muktzeh* and aiding plant growth. [In principle, these issues are subject to differing *Halachic* opinions and other variables.] If the potted plant accidentally overturns, or some soil spills out, it should be left alone. [If doing so will create a hindrance or inconvenience, a *Rav* should be consulted.]

For practical purposes, a potted plant should generally be treated as attached to the ground. Therefore, one may not water it at all or detach any of its leaves or branches. One may not lean on a potted tree or shrub, move it with his hands even ever so slightly, place anything in its branches, or remove anything caught in its branches.

Flowers, branches or leaves that were detached (regardless of the cause) on *Shabbos* or *Shavuos* are *Muktzeh*. The same is true even if there is just a doubt whether it became detached on *Shabbos* or *Shavuos*. It goes without saying that they are *Muktzeh* when still attached to the ground.

One may smell flowers and plants on *Shabbos* or *Shavuos* – even if still attached to the ground (and hence *Muktzeh*). One should remember to make the appropriate *Brocho*. However, one may not smell attached fruits.

## 🕯️ SHABBOS (5<sup>TH</sup> SIVAN)

Candle-lighting on Friday night is at 4:50pm. [If eating out, one should ensure that some practical benefit is derived from the candles after nightfall.]

On *Shabbos* day, *Av Harachamim* and *Tzidkosecha* are not recited.

Just like on *Erev Shabbos*, it is preferable to refrain from beginning a full meal once the tenth *Halachic* hour of the day begins (2:43pm), so that one has an appetite to properly enjoy the *Yom Tov* meal at night.

For *Parshas Nasso*, which is read at *Mincha* and into the following week, there are differences of opinion regarding some of the *Aliyos*. According to Chabad custom, the last *Aliyah* at *Mincha* (as well as Monday and Thursday) ends at *Perek 4 Posuk 33*. For the purposes of *Chitas*, *Rishon* ends at *Perek 4 Posuk 28*, and *Shishi* ends at *Perek 7 Posuk 82*.

The sixth chapter of *Pirkei Avos* is recited after *Mincha*.

## 🕯️ FIRST NIGHT OF SHAVUOS

*Shabbos* ends at 5:52pm. *Maariv* (and *Kiddush*) should not begin before this time, nor should tasks and preparations required for *Yom Tov* be conducted before this time.

*Vatodienu* is recited during the *Shmoneh Esrei* of *Maariv*. [If one forgot to do so, he does not correct his mistake, but should say *Baruch Hamavdil Bein Koidesh L'Koidesh* before doing anything forbidden on *Shabbos* but permitted on *Yom Tov*, or before performing tasks for the second night of *Yom Tov*. The same applies to a woman who will not be *davening Maariv*.]

The candles should be kindled with a pre-existing flame, and only after *Shabbos* ends. The *Brochos* are *L'Hadlik Ner Shel Yom Tov* and *Shehecheyanu*. [If eating out, one should ensure that some practical benefit is derived from the candles during the night.]

Candles must not be waxed into place, nor may the wicks be twisted. When necessary, one may remove the wax from the previous night in a way that it falls directly into the bin.

On *Yom Tov*, one may not relight a candle that extinguished for the first time on *Shabbos*.

When a man is required to light candles, he does not recite *Shehecheyanu*, as he will be doing so in *Kiddush*. [Therefore, it is best that he lights candles right before *Kiddush*, so that his *Shehecheyanu* is linked to both.] Similarly, if a woman needs to recite her own *Kiddush*, she does not recite *Shehecheyanu*, as she already did so at candle-lighting.

During *Kiddush* on the first night of *Shavuos*, one recites a total of five *Brochos*: *Yayin*, *Kiddush*, *Ner*, *Havdallah* and *Zman*. [If one jumbled the order, he does not need to repeat it in the correct order, unless he reversed the order of *Yayin* and *Kiddush*.]

When reciting the *Brocho* of *Ner*, one looks at the candle, but does not bring the candles together, nor does one look at his fingernails or bring them close to the flames.

If one forgot to recite *Ner* and *Havdallah* during *Kiddush*, he should recite it over a cup of wine as soon as he realizes. He should also recite the *Brocho* of *Hagofen* if required (such as when he already *bentched*, or he intended at the time of *Kiddush* not to drink any more wine during the meal). If he did not remember until the next morning, he should recite the *Brocho* of *Havdallah* over a cup of wine, but not the *Brocho* of *Ner*.

A woman who needs to recite her own *Kiddush* should not say *Shehecheyanu*, as she already did so at candle-lighting.

One must drink (a *revi's* of) wine every day of *Yom Tov*. This should be paid special attention by those who do not make their own *Kiddush*.

## 🕯️ YA'ALEH VEYAVO IN BENTCHING

If one forgets to recite *Ya'aleh Veyavo* in *bentching*, but remembers before *Hashem's* name at *Bonei Yerushalayim*, he goes back. If one realized after that, but before starting the next *Brocho*, he recites the extra *Brocho* as printed in the *Bentcher*. If one already began even the first word of the next *Brocho*, one must begin *bentching* again.

The *Horachamon* for *Yom Tov* is recited.

## 🕯️ TIKUN LEIL SHAVUOS

The custom is to stay awake the entire first night of *Shavuos* learning *Torah*.

Needless to say, the night of *Shavuos* is not the appropriate time for lectures or forums about social, economic, political and communal issues. Although important, they cannot really be regarded as a form of *Torah* study – unless the focus is to learn the *Torah's* perspective.

The recitation of *Tikun Leil Shavuos* should be prioritized over all other forms of learning and *Shiurim*.

One should be mindful of the errors that have crept into the text of the *Zohar* and *Sefer Yetzirah* in many printed editions. One should recite the text as corrected in *Likutei Sichos* volume 28, page 315.

The *Tefillos* and *Yehi Ratzons* that appear in some editions of *Tikun Leil Shavuos* are omitted, and *Kaddish* is not recited.

If, for whatever reason, one did not complete the entire *Tikun Leil Shavuos* on the first night of *Shavuos*, he should do so at the earliest opportunity.

Shortly before dawn (6:05am), one immerses in the *Mikvah* four times.

At dawn, one washes *Neggel Vasser* and recites *Brochos*.

One should not begin learning *Torah* after dawn until he concludes *Brochos*.

The *Brocho* of *Tzitzis* is not recited at this time as it is still too early.

After staying awake the entire night, it is generally recommended to sleep for several hours and *daven* at the usual time, in order to focus on one's *davening* at the usual unhurried pace.

Since *B'dieved* one fulfils his obligation when reciting the daytime *Shema* immediately after dawn, it is worthwhile to recite it with the intention that he thereby fulfils his obligation only if he neglects to do so at the ideal time.

One does not recite *Krias Shema She'al Hamittah* when going to sleep after dawn.

If one chooses to *daven* before going to sleep, he should ensure that he recites the *Brocho* of *Tzitzis* and *Shema* after the

earliest time (6:32am), and *Shmoneh Esrei* after sunrise (7:29am).

The *Brocho* of *Tzitzis* is not recited on a *Tallis Koton* worn overnight. One who does not wear a *Tallis Gadol* should change his *Tallis Koton* before reciting the *Brocho*.

## 🕯 SHACHARIS & HALLEL

Care must be taken to recite *Krias Shema* during the proper time (between 6:32-9:53am). One who goes to sleep prior to *davening* should ensure that he awakens in time to recite *Shema*.

Full *Hallel* is recited on *Shavuot*. When reciting *Hallel*, one may not interrupt it – other than for those things that one may respond to during the *Brochos* of *Krias Shema*. [I.e. If the *Chazzan* recites *Kedushah*, one responds *Kodosh*, *Boruch* and *Yimloch*. When the *Chazzan* says *Ha'E-I Hakodosh*, one answers *Omein*. When the *Chazzan* says *Modim*, one answers the three words *Modim Anachnu Loch*. When the *Chazzan* recites *Kaddish*, one answers *Omein Yehei Shmei* etc, and *Omein* to *d'amiran b'olmo*. One also answers *Borchu* and *Omein* when the *Brochos* are recited before and after an *Aliyah* or *Haftorah*.]

*Hallel* is recited standing (unless one is feeble or infirm).

It is preferable to recite *Hallel* with the *Minyan*. If one is not up to the *Minyan*, this creates a dilemma; on the one hand it is appropriate to recite *Hallel* with the congregation (if he hasn't yet begun *Boruch She'omar*), and on the other hand, it is appropriate that one *davens* in the correct order. For this reason, the *Rebbeim* were punctilious about being up to *Hallel* when the *Minyan* recited it on *Yom-Tov*.

If one forgot to recite *Hallel*, he should recite it with a *Brocho* as soon as he remembers, as long as it is not yet sunset (or without a *Brocho* until *Tzeis*).

If one mistakenly recited half-*Hallel*, he must repeat the entire *Hallel* (without a *Brocho*).

## 🕯 KRIAS HATORAH

It is not our custom to recite *Akdomus*. (The *Rebbe* would recite it quietly.)

The *Aliya* containing the *Aseres Hadibros* is given to a prominent person.

The *Rebbe* instituted that all men, women, children, and even babies and

newborns (health permitting), attend *Shule* to hear the *Aseres Hadibros*. The congregation stands during the reading of the *Aseres Hadibros*, facing the *Sefer Torah*.

The first day's *Maftir* is given to a learned and prominent person, due to the special significance of this *Haftorah*. The congregants read along in an undertone, and some have the custom to stand up while reading it.

## 🕯 FIRST DAY – YOM TOV MEAL

The *Mitzvah* of *V'Samechta B'Chagecha* requires one to celebrate *Yom Tov* with his family. As such, one should not overly prolong the time he spends at any communal *Kiddush* or *Farbrengen*.

If possible, one avoids beginning the meal after the tenth *Halachic* hour begins (approximately 2:43pm), so that one has an appetite for the *Yom-Tov* meal of the second night.

It is customary to eat *Milchigs* on the first day of *Shavuot*. By the same token, *Yom Tov* must be celebrated with the consumption of meat.

One of the reasons for eating *Milchigs* is to emphasize that *Yidden* – unlike the angels who visited *Avraham Avinu* – are careful to separate between milk and meat. As such, special care must be taken to adhere to all the *Halachos* of *Kashrus*. These include:

- Waiting one full hour after *Milchigs*, or six hours after eating cheeses cured for more than six months. [It may not be practical to consume aged cheeses on *Shavuot*, as one must also eat meat.]
- Making a *Brocho Acharona* between *Milchigs* and *Fleishigs*.
- Not using the same tablecloths, utensils and loaves for *Milchigs* and *Fleishigs*.
- If the same table is shared by people eating *Milchigs* and *Fleishigs*, a *Hekker* (Halachically acceptable indicator) must be utilised. This can generally be achieved by using separate placemats or placing something distinctive and unusual in between.
- Not eating *Milchigs* together with a *Challah* baked in a *Fleishig* oven or vice versa. [There is grounds to be lenient if the *Challos* weren't

physically touching any part of the oven, and the oven was absolutely clean and devoid of steam whilst the *Challos* were baking.]

- Not baking a *Milchig* or *Fleishig* loaf of bread lest people mistakenly think it is *Parve*. If already baked, it may not be eaten. Exceptions: The loaf has a distinctive shape, or it is visibly and obviously noticeable as *Milchig* or *Fleishig*, or it is small enough to be consumed within one day.
- Using separate knives and blenders (or *Parve* utensils) to cut vegetables used with *Milchigs* and *Fleishigs*. This is especially true when cutting sharp vegetables (e.g. an onion), since they assume the status of the knife even if it was completely clean and recently unused.
- If *Parve* food was **already** cooked in a *Fleishig* pot, and the pot had **not** been used for *Fleishig* in the previous 24 hours, the *Parve* food may be eaten with *Milchig* food. If the pot **had** been used for *Fleishig* in the previous 24 hours, the *Parve* food may be served in *Milchig* dishes, but not eaten directly together with *Milchig* food. [All the above applies to *Parve* food already cooked in a *Fleishig* pot. However, one should not initially plan to prepare *Parve* food in a *Fleishig* pot with the intention of eating it with *Milchig* food or utensils; in cases of need, a *Rav* should be consulted.]

Needless to say, *Chassidim* (amongst others) are careful to eat only *Chalav Yisroel*. Accordingly, one should not even eat *Parve* or *Chalav-Yisroel* foods that came into contact with non-*Chalav-Yisroel* utensils whilst hot.

The *Brocho* on cheesecake containing flour is *Mezonos*, even if the crust is thin.

The first day of *Shavuot* is the *Yohrtzeit* of the *Baal Shem Tov*, and is therefore an opportune time to mention a teaching and story of the *Baal Shem Tov*. *Shavuot* is also associated with *Moshe Rabbeinu* (who received the *Torah*) and *Dovid Hamelech* (who compiled *Tehillim*). Therefore, *Shavuot* is an opportune time to enhance one's commitment to learning *Chitas*.

## 🕯 FIRST DAY AFTERNOON

The *Rebbe* instituted the custom of *Tahalucha*, encouraging all *Chassidim* to



visit community *Shules* and enhance their *Simchas Yom Tov* by sharing words of *Torah* (both *Nigleh* and *Chassidus*). The Rebbe attached much importance to *Tahalucha*.

One may **not** perform any preparations on the first day for the second night and day of *Yom Tov*.

## ❧ SECOND NIGHT OF SHAVUOS

On the second night of *Shavuos*, the candles should be kindled with a pre-existing flame, and not before *Tzeis Hakochavim* (5:51pm). The *Brochos* are *Shel Yom Tov* and *Shehecheyanu*.

Tasks and preparations required for the second night of *Yom Tov* should not be conducted before this time.

Candles must not be waxed into place, nor may the wicks be twisted. When necessary, one may remove the wax from the previous night in a way that it falls directly into the bin.

## ❧ SECOND DAY OF SHAVUOS

Some have the custom of reading *Rus* in *Shule* on the second day of *Yom Tov*. Although that is not our custom, the link between *Rus* and *Shavuos* is observed by the fact that we read the entire *Sefer* as part of *Tikun Leil Shavuos*.

*Yizkor* is recited before *Musaf*. Those who leave the *Shule* for *Yizkor* may recite "*Av Harachamim*" after *Yizkor* if they wish to.

After *Mincha* of the second day of *Yom Tov*, we wash for *Hamotzi* and partake in a *Farbrengen* at which the *Nigunim* of the *Rebbeim* (and the *Daled Bavos*) are sung. At these *Farbrengens*, the *Rebbe* would frequently speak about learning *Chitas* and *Rambam*; about the importance of *Chinuch*; and encourage everyone's participation in the *Kinus Torah*.

## ❧ MOTZEI SHAVUOS

*Ya'aleh Veyavo* (and *Horachamon*) is recited during *Bentching*, even if it is already *Tzeis Hakochavim* (5:51pm).

On *Motzei Shavuos*, *Kiddush Levana* is recited after *Maariv*.

*Havdalah* is recited without *Besomim* and candles. *V'Yiten Lecha* is not recited.

## ❧ AFTER SHAVUOS

The day after *Yom Tov* is known as "*Yom Tovo'ach*". It is also *Isru Chag*, and

should be celebrated with additional food items. One may not fast on this day – even a *Chosson* and *Kallah* on their wedding day.

In association with the *Yom Tov* of *Shavuos*, the *Rebbe* encouraged all to attend a *Kinus Torah*. [The *Kinus Torah* in Melbourne will take place at *Yeshiva Gedolah* on Sunday after *Shavuos*, from 3:30-7:00pm.]

The days after *Shavuos* until the twelfth of *Sivan* (inclusive) are known as "*Y'mei Tashlumin*", during which *Tachnun* is not recited. The *Alter Rebbe* once remarked that these are the days to "pack" all the treasures and revelations of *Shavuos*.

On the *Shabbos* after *Shavuos* (12<sup>th</sup> *Sivan*), *Av Harachamim* and *Tzidkosecha* are not recited.



## ❧ INTERNATIONAL DATE LINE

One should not cross the International Date Line during *Sefirah Haomer*, unless it is absolutely unavoidable.

Polar flight routes can be problematic. If it is absolutely necessary to fly such a route, or after the fact, one should seek guidance from a *Rav* familiar with these matters.

If one crossed the International Date Line, he observes *Shavuos* in accordance with his personal count of *Sefiras Haomer*. Thus, his first day of *Shavuos* will not coincide with the sixth of *Sivan*; the day of *Matan Torah*.

One who travelled east (e.g. from Australia to USA) observes *Shavuos* a day earlier than the people at his destination (i.e. on *Shabbos* and Sunday, the fifth and sixth of *Sivan*). These *Halachos* are relevant for this situation:

- *Shabbos*: This day is *Yom-Tov* for the traveller but not for the local populace. The traveller should recite the *Yom Tov Tefillos* and *Kiddush* (adding the selections for *Shabbos*), but omit the three words "*Zman Matan Toraseinu*".
- Sunday: This is the second day of *Yom-Tov* for the traveller but the first day for the local populace. The traveller observes *Yom-Tov* as usual, and he may include the three words "*Zman Matan Toraseinu*" in his *Tefillos*. At the end of this day, the traveller recites *Havdallah* in private.
- Monday: This day is *Yom-Tov* for the local populace but weekday for the

traveller. The traveller should don *Tefillin* and *daven* the weekday *Tefillos*. Other than that, he should not perform any *Melocho*, even in private. any *Melocho*, even in private. Likewise, for appearances sake, he should act as though it is *Yom Tov*, such as wearing *Yom Tov* clothing and attending *Shule*.

One who travelled west (e.g. from USA to Australia) observes *Shavuos* a day later than the people at his destination (i.e. on Monday and Tuesday, the seventh and eighth of *Sivan*). These *Halachos* are relevant for this situation:

- Sunday: This day is *Yom-Tov* for the local populace but weekday for the traveller. The traveller should don *Tefillin* and *daven* the weekday *Tefillos*, and recite the regular *Havdallah* on *Motzei Shabbos*. Other than that, he should not perform any *Melocho*, even in private. Likewise, for appearances sake, he should act as though it is *Yom Tov*, such as wearing *Yom Tov* clothing and attending *Shule*.
- Monday: This is the first day of *Yom-Tov* for the traveller but the second day for the local populace. The traveller observes *Yom-Tov* as usual; however, he omits the words "*Zman Matan Toraseinu*" in his *Tefillos*.
- Tuesday: This day is *Yom-Tov* for the traveller but not for the local populace. The traveller should *daven* the *Yom Tov Tefillos*, but omit the three words "*Zman Matan Toraseinu*". He also needs to recite *Kiddush* at the night and morning meals, and *Havdallah* at the end of the day. Even though it is weekday for the local populace, the traveller may not instruct another Jew to perform *Melocho* on his behalf. In fact, if the traveller notices someone doing *Melocho* on his behalf, he must object. However, if the *Melocho* was not performed on the traveller's behalf, or he didn't know about it until after it was completed, he may benefit from the *Melocho*.

Whenever the traveller's *Tefillos* are at variance with those of the local populace, he should *daven* discreetly and not call attention to the fact.

*Yizkor* is recited together with the local community.



*Kabbolas Hatorah B'Simcha ub'Pnimityus!*