



MENUCHAV'SIMCHA

A HEAVENLY SHAVUOS

THE AMAZING STORY OF
RAV SHLOMO ALKABETZ

SHAVUOS

BY RABBI YEHUDA WAITMAN

The time-honored custom in Klal Yisrael is to remain awake the entire night of Shavuos, immersed in Torah study. Many reasons are given as the reason for this custom, but the most well-known one is the idea that the night before Kabbalas Hatorah, the Jewish people went to sleep. The next morning, Hashem, as it were, had to “wake them up” to attend Kabbalas Hatorah. This is perceived as a failing on the part of the Jews; therefore, each year we stay up the whole night as a sort of atonement for this. The Zohar teaches of the awesome level of holiness of this night. The ש"ל"ה (Rav Yeshaya Horowitz, 1555-1630) relates an incredible story that occurred on the night of Shavuos. He records a letter written by Rav Shlomo Alkabetz (1500-1584), a major Kabbalist who lived in Tzfas. The letter describes the scene as Rav Shlomo and several of his colleagues began the night of Shavuos, determined to learn in depth without interruption. After several hours, a heavenly voice suddenly began speaking to them: “Praiseworthy are you, that you have returned the crown to its former glory.... behold I am the Mishnah, coming to speak with you..” With a start, they realized that the voice, was the “Soul of the Mishna” speaking with them. The voice continued: “know that the angels in heaven are silent, listening to your voices learning...know that if you had been ten men, you would have risen even higher....” The voice then proceeded to teach them wonderous secrets of the Torah. Rav Shlomo and his friends were besides themselves with joy, and the next morning they agreed to meet again the second night of Shavuos. That night, they were a group of ten, and they were again visited by the heavenly voice, who proceeded to teach them even more profound secrets of the Torah. Rav Alkabetz concludes his letter with words of inspiration to the friend he was writing to. From this mind-boggling incident, we can infer a little bit the tremendous impact the learning of Klal Yisrael on Shavous night has on the Heavenly spheres.

(ראה כל המכתב בספר ש"ה מסכת שבועות פרק תורה אור אות ו-יג)

Avraham ben Avraham, Ger Tzedek of Vilna

May 23 1749/7 Sivan 5509

The Second Day of Shavous is the yartzheit of Avraham Ben Avraham, the Ger Tzedek of Vilna. Avraham Ben Avraham was the adopted name of Graf (Count) Valentin Potocki, a Polish nobleman who converted to Judaism and was burned alive al kiddush Hashem. When he was sixteen, Graf Valentin and his friend Zarembo were enrolled in a Catholic seminary, studying for the priesthood. One day, they encountered a Jewish shopkeeper who impressed them with his wisdom and scholarship. Intrigued, they began to learn the basics of Judaism from him, and were drawn away from Christianity. Slowly, they began to consider conversion. A confused Valentin traveled to Rome, where he decided to accept Judaism. The two friends eventually travelled to Amsterdam, where they both converted. Zarembo took the name Baruch ben Avraham, and Valentin chose to become known as Avraham ben Avraham. Avraham left Amsterdam and returned to Vilna, where he sat and learned in a local shul, dressed like any other Jew from those times. Meanwhile, Valentin's parents, who were powerful nobles, were searching frantically for their son. The search, however, was futile. Eventually, Avraham was discovered by the son of a tailor who suspected him of being more than he looked, and he was arrested by the Church and charged with heresy. At his trial, he was convicted and condemned to be burned at the stake. It is related that the Vilna Gaon, who encouraged and supported Avraham throughout his ordeal, offered to save him through Kabbalistic means, but Avraham refused, choosing instead to sanctify the name of Hashem. The date of his execution was set for May 23, 1749, which was 7 Sivan, the second day of Shavous 5509. No Jews were permitted to be present during the execution or to collect his remains after his death. The Vilna Gaon, however, sent a Jew by the name of R' Leizer Shishkes, who resembled a non-Jew, to collect the ashes. He bribed the soldiers who were guarding the smoldering fire, and they gave him the ashes of Avraham, which were then buried in the Vilna cemetery. Due to government censorship, the matzeiva erected above the kever stated simply, “Avraham ben Avraham Ger Tzedek, second day Shavous 5509”. There is a tradition in the name of the Vilna Gaon that after the Ger Tzedek was killed, the kochos hatumah, forces of impurity in the world, were permanently diminished. The day the Ger Tzedek was killed, 7 Sivan, was also the day Rav Chaim of Volozhin, the primary disciple of the Gaon, was born. The story of the Ger Tzedek is inspiring and in many ways parallels that of another famous Ger Tzedek, Rus, whose story we read on the second day of Shavous. Rus left behind a royal and luxurious lifestyle in order to embrace the Torah, and displayed tremendous mesiras nefesh in the process. Valentin as well left behind his noble background to become a Ger, and he is remembered for all time as the epitome of mesiras nefesh.

Yehi Zichro Boruch

A TRUE KABBOLAS HATORAH

LESSONS FROM OUR LEADERS

BY RABBI MORDECHAI WEIS

Hagaon Rav Nachum Partovitz, entered the Mirrer Beis Hamedrash. As he made his way to his seat, he was spied by two bochurim, who, instead of learning, were engaged in a *shmooz*. Not wanting to disappoint their beloved Rosh Yeshivah, as Rav Nachum approached, one of the bochurim raised his voice in the timeless and hallowed sing song tune of learning Gemara “*Ai Ai Ai Tannu Rabbanan*”. Rav Nachum, understanding what had transpired, bent over toward the bochur and whispered, “In all of Maseches Nedarim, the words ‘*Tannu Rabbanan*’ are not found”.

When this story was related to Hagaon Harav Chaim Kanievsky, he closed his eyes for a few moments and exclaimed “It’s true, there is no ‘*Tannu Rabbanan*’ in all of Maseches Nedarim, but on *daf chof zayin* it states ‘*DeTannu Rabbanan*’”.

Those present were awed by this display Rav Chaim’s mastery of the Gemara. Someone excitedly ran and told this to Horav Aharon Leib Shteinman. He was not surprised or moved. “Of course,” he replied. “That’s his supermarket. Is anyone surprised when the manager of a large supermarket knows exactly where every product is found, his inventory, what is being ordered and what is unavailable? For Rav Chaim, Torah is his supermarket.”



YOM TOV

Q: How do I fulfill the *mitzvah* of rejoicing on Yom Tov?

A: It is a biblical *mitzvah* to rejoice and be happy on Yom Tov. A husband is obligated to ensure that his wife, children, and others in the household are happy as well. To fulfill this *mitzvah*, one should buy treats for his children, and purchase clothing or jewelry for his wife and older children according to his financial ability. If one cannot afford much, he should at least buy them something small and inexpensive.

שו"ע או"ח סי' תקכ"ט ס"ב, מ"ב שם, ביה"ל ד"ה כפי ממונו, ועי' בשו"ת רע"א השמטות סי' א', לחם משנה פי"ד הל' מעשה קרבנות הי"ד, שאגת אריה סי' ס"ו, לגבי החיוב שמחת יו"ט בנשים אם מוטלת עליהם או על הבעל.

Q: How does the man fulfill the obligation of being happy on Yom Tov?

A: When the *Beis Hamikdash* stood, men fulfilled this obligation by eating meat from the *korban shelamim*. Nowadays, since we no longer have those *korbanos*, the obligation of rejoicing can be fulfilled through drinking wine, as the *pasuk* says, "Wine gladdens the heart of man" (Tehillim 104:15). Nevertheless, there is still a *mitzvah* to eat meat on Yom Tov. On Shavuos, however, many have the custom to eat dairy and there is what to rely on.

ביה"ל סי' תקכ"ט ס"ב ד"ה כיצד, ועי' בשיעורי הלכה יו"ט פי"ז בענין אכילת בשר בשבועות.

Q: How much wine do I need to drink? Can my *Kiddush* wine count for this?

A: One must drink a *reviis* (about 3 oz.) of wine. If one makes *Kiddush* on wine, that wine can count for this halacha as well. However, this only applies to the person making *Kiddush* who drank the wine. The other men in the household should each make sure to drink their own *reviis*.

שמעתי מר"ז סמיט שליט"א (שיעור רביעית הוא מרב פאם), עי' בביה"ל סי' תקכ"ט ס"ב ד"ה כיצד, ועי' היטב במ"ב שם סקו"א.

Q: When lighting candles for Yom Tov, should I recite the *bracha* before I light or after?

A: When lighting Shabbos candles, the custom is to light first and then recite the *bracha*, since some hold that reciting the *bracha* constitutes accepting Shabbos. On Yom Tov, however, since lighting is permitted, many hold that one should first recite the *bracha* and then light. Nevertheless, one who has the custom to light first, as on Shabbos, may continue doing so.

מ"ב סי' רס"ג סק"ז.

SHAVUOS 5786

At the Kollel

Shiurim

12:20 - 12:45 AM: RABBI YOSEF FRANKLIN
THE HIMALAYAS EXPEDITION
Join Rabbi Yosef Franklin as He Searches The Ganges River Basin For the Lost Ten Tribes

12:45 - 1:10 AM: RABBI MORDECHAI WEIS
LEFTY POWER
Left vs. Right: Unexpected Halachic Ramifications

1:15 - 2:15 AM: DR. DAVID WEISS
MAY WE TAKE THE KIDNEY?
Halachic Dilemmas of Organ Donation and Mental Incapacity

2:20 - 2:45 AM: RABBI YEHOSHUA SCHECHTER
THE TRUTH ABOUT THE BEES
The Halachos of Honey, Bee Byproducts, and Hidden Ingredients in Today's Food Industry

2:50 - 3:15 AM: RABBI YEHUDA WAINTMAN
THE BRACHA ON POWER
From Ancient Kings to Elected Presidents - Is This Blessing Still Relevant?

3:20-4:20 AM:
THE RETURN OF THE PIG
Edom/America's Part in the Final Redemption
WITH RAV YECHIEL BIBERFELD

THE BEIS MEDRASH WILL BE OPEN FOR CHAVRUSA OR INDIVIDUAL LEARNING!
REFRESHMENTS WILL BE AVAILABLE ON THE LOWER LEVEL ALL NIGHT!

SHAVUOS BOYS LEARNING 5786!

FOR BOYS GRADES 3-5TH

12:15-12:55 AM: RABBI YEHOSHUA SCHECHTER
THE SECRETS OF THE HIVE:
A BUZZING JOURNEY INTO THE WORLD OF KASHRUS

12:55-1:30 AM: RABBI YITZ LEVI
UNDERSTANDING THE CURIOUS PROCESS OF HARVESTING AND PREPARING THE MINCHAS HA'OMER

1:30-2:15 AM RABBI YOSEF FRANKLIN
THE MYSTERIOUS SOMBATYON RIVER
WILL IT EVER BE FOUND?

WITH SPECIAL NOSH SERVED!

SHAVUOS 5786

At the Kollel

PLEASE JOIN US FOR A

Neilas HaChag

FOLLOWING MINCHA, 2ND DAY SHAVUOS (SHALOSH SEUDOS, SHABBOS KODESH)

WITH DIVREI TORAH, GREAT FOOD, SONG AND DANCE, AS WE SAVOR THE LAST MINUTES OF THESE SPECIAL DAYS

FOR MEN מִינְחָה 7:00 PM - מִדְּבָרִים 9:12 PM