



# SHAVUOS LEARNING

Take-Home Booklet

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Dear friends,

Shavuos is a special and unique time. A time of joy, gratitude, and pride in being a Jew, and in the special gift that is the Torah. We have prepared a booklet for you to learn at home. In it you will find something for everyone. Many have the custom to stay up throughout the first night of Shavuos learning Torah, as a reflection of our excitement for the gift we are to receive the next morning.

We know that each Rosh Hashanah a new energy is brought into the world for the year to come. Similarly, each Shavuos the Torah is given anew, infusing our year with an enhanced vitality and enthusiasm for Torah learning, empowering us to “live it”. When we consider that Hashem used the Torah as a blueprint for creation, we become aware that within Shavuos lies the power to draw down blessing, healing, and peace for the world, as we know that the Torah’s “ways are pleasantness, and all its paths are peace.”

May we use this special time to appreciate the great gift that Hashem has given us, connect through the Torah together with our families, and draw down for ourselves and our loved ones a new world of healing and blessing, and may we all receive the Torah in joy and earnestness.

Gut YomTov,  
Rabbi Sasson



### The 10 Commandments

Each year on the holiday of Shavuot, we relive the special moment when Hashem spoke to 3 million Jews and delivered the 10 Commandments which form the basis of the 613 Mitzvot in the Torah. We stand and face the Torah, just as the Jews stood around Mount Sinai and listened carefully to every word read from the Torah.

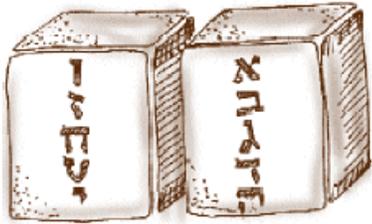
The Lord descended upon Mount Sinai, to the peak of the mountain, and the Lord summoned Moses to the peak of the mountain, and Moses ascended. The Lord said to Moses, "Go down, warn the people lest they break [their formation to go nearer] to the Lord, and many of them will fall. And also, the priests who go near to the Lord shall prepare themselves, lest the Lord wreak destruction upon them." And Moses said to the Lord, "The people cannot ascend to Mount Sinai, for You warned us saying, Set boundaries for the mountain and sanctify it.' " But the Lord said to him, "Go, descend, and [then] you shall ascend, and Aaron with you, but the priests and the populace shall not break [their formation] to ascend to the Lord, lest He wreak destruction upon them." So Moses went down to the people and said [this] to them. God spoke all these words, to respond:

1. "I am the Lord, your God, Who took you out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of bondage.
2. You shall not have the gods of others in My presence. You shall not make for yourself a graven image or any likeness which is in the heavens above, which is on the earth below, or which is in the water beneath the earth. You shall neither prostrate yourself before them nor worship them, for I, the Lord, your God, am a zealous God, Who visits the iniquity of the fathers upon the sons, upon the third and the fourth generation of those who hate Me, and [I] perform loving kindness to thousands [of generations], to those who love Me and to those who keep My commandments.
3. You shall not take the name of the Lord, your God, in vain, for the Lord will not hold blameless anyone who takes His name in vain.
4. Remember the Sabbath day to sanctify it. Six days may you work and perform all your labor, but the seventh day is a Sabbath to the Lord, your God; you shall perform no labor, neither you, your son, your daughter, your manservant, your maidservant, your beast, nor your stranger who is in your cities. For [in] six days the Lord made the heaven and the earth, the sea and all that is in them, and He rested on the seventh day. Therefore, the Lord blessed the Sabbath day and sanctified it.
5. Honor your father and your mother, in order that your days be lengthened on the land that the Lord, your God, is giving you.
6. You shall not murder.
7. You shall not commit adultery.
8. You shall not steal (kidnap).
9. You shall not bear false witness against your neighbor.
10. You shall not covet your neighbor's house. You shall not covet your neighbor's wife, his manservant, his maidservant, his ox, his donkey, or whatever belongs to your neighbor."

כ. וירד יי על הר סיני אל ראש ההר ויקרא יי למשה אל ראש ההר ויעל משה: כא. ויאמר יי אל משה רד העד בעם פן יהרסו אל יי לראות ונפל ממנו רב: כב. וגם הכהנים הנגשים אל יי יתקדשו פן יפרץ בהם יי: כג. ויאמר משה אל יי לא יוכל העם לעלות אל הר סיני כי אתה העדתה בנו לאמר הנבל את ההר וקדשתו: כד. ויאמר אליו יי לך רד ועלית אתה ואהרן עמך והכהנים והעם אל יהרסו לעלות אל יי פן יפרץ בם: כה. וירד משה אל העם ויאמר אליהם: א. וידבר אלהים את כל הדברים האלה לאמר: ב. אנכי יי אלהיך אשר הוצאתיך מארץ מצרים מבית עבדים: ג. לא יהיה לך אלהים אחרים על פני: ד. לא תעשה לך פסל וכל תמונה אשר בשמים ממעל ואשר בארץ מתחת ואשר במים מתחת לארץ: ה. לא תשתחוה להם ולא תעבדם כי אנכי יהוה אלהיך אל קנא פקד עון אבת על בנים על שלשים ועל רבעים לשנאי: ו. ועשה חסד לאלפים לאהבי ולשמרי מצותי: ז. לא תשא את שם יי אלהיך לשוא כי לא ינקה יי את אשר ישא את שמו לשוא: ח. זכור את יום השבת לקדשו: ט. ששת ימים תעבד ועשית כל מלאכתך: י. ויום השביעי שבת ליהרהר אלהיך לא תעשה כל מלאכה אתה ובנך ובתך עבדך ואמתך ובהמתך וגרד אשר בשעריך: יא. כי ששת ימים עשה יי את השמים ואת הארץ את הים ואת כל אשר בם וינח ביום השביעי על פן ברך יי את יום השבת ויקדשהו: יב. כבד את אביך ואת אמך למען יארכו ימך על האדמה אשר יי אלהיך נתן לך: יג. לא תרצח ס לא תנאף ס לא תגנב ס לא תענה ברעך עד שקר: יד. לא תחמד בית רעך ס לא תחמד אשת רעך ועבדו ואמתו ושורו וחמרו וכל אשר לרעך:



# Fresh Thinking: The Ten Commandments



Using the guidelines provided, discuss the Ten Commandments and their relevance to you

## 1. I am the L-rd, your G-d.

- Why do you think Hashem needs to remind us at this point that we were slaves and He redeemed us?
- The Giving of the Torah was seven weeks after the Exodus. Discuss what it must have been like as a Jew during those seven weeks. What would you have been thinking?  
What would you have been looking forward to?  
What would you be remembering?

Let each person in your group share an insight/ memory they might have had, had they been there at the time.

- How easy is it for us to believe that Hashem really runs the whole world and that all He does is for the good?  
Use examples of times when you have felt His hand in your life and times where you have felt that He has let you down.
- How would you explain Hashem to a four-year old?

## 2. You shall have no other gods...

- Do you think people would accept G-d more easily if they could see Him?  
Why do you think He has chosen to remain invisible?
- What are the three biggest "gods" of the 21<sup>st</sup> Century? Discuss.
- Atheism is supposedly the fastest-growing religious movement in the United States.  
Why do you think this is?  
Which is worse, a world of atheists or a world of religious fanatics?
- What would be your personal "foreign god" (i.e. what do you think interferes with your feeling that Hashem is the only true force in life?)?



### 3. Do not take His name in vain

- Do you think we are quicker to blame Hashem for bad things than to thank Him for good things?
- Select one member of the group to “play G-d” and have the rest of the group come up with questions they would want to ask G-d when feeling upset or angry.

### 4. Shabbos

- Share a story of how Shabbos added value to your life.
- Is Shabbos only to help us de-stress? What if you're retired? Or on a Sabbatical?
- Of the following, debate which should be the three priorities of Shabbos:  
1. Rest 2. Family time 3. Personal down-time 4. No technology 5. Davening 6. Torah Study  
7. Good food 8. Community connection 9. Meditation 10. Refocusing

### 5. Honouring parents

- Divide your group into three: Your parents' generation, your generation and your children's generation. Then debate how best to approach the following. In each case, try remain as respectful as possible, while remaining true to your position:
  - o Texting v phoning
  - o How to respond to someone who has betrayed you (in this case, role-play that you feel it is the older generation who has betrayed you and you want to confront them).
  - o Spending v saving
  - o Can/ should you respect a parent who has been exposed as a criminal?

### 6. Murder

- If someone breaks into your home at night, but you cannot tell if he is armed, would Torah allow you to fatally shoot him?
- If you suspect that your neighbour is a terrorist, are you allowed to assassinate him?
- Bibi Netanyahu promised a “decisive response” to a fatal shooting attack in Tel Aviv. Some argue that a “response” is too late and he should pre-emptively strike terror cells in the West Bank. Would Torah support this attitude?
- The Torah says that embarrassing someone is akin to murdering them. Why do you think this is?

### 7. Adultery

After Amy Pollard, 28, discovered her husband's SecondLife character sleeping with another female player online she filed for divorce citing "unreasonable behaviour".



She claimed that David Pollard, 40, committed adultery with the animated woman and said that it is the second time she had caught his character cheating on her.

In February last year, she said that he was having an “affair” with an online call girl character and she even hired an online private detective in the game to investigate his adultery.

She has filed for divorce, which is due to be finalised next week. (This was in 2008).

- Is virtual adultery considered adultery?
- What kind of behaviour would the Torah consider too close to adultery for comfort?
- What are the key ingredients for a stable marriage?
- Do you have a responsibility to alert someone to the fact that their spouse may be cheating?

## 8. Kidnapping<sup>1</sup>

- How do you train your children to remain safe from sexual predators?
- Do a trust audit. Who is in your children’s lives who you could trust implicitly, who are you unsure about and is there anyone your gut tells you with whom you need to be more cautious/ wary/ distant?

## 9. False witness

- Is it better to tell a white lie when the truth may hurt someone, or is it best to tell the truth and face the consequences?
- Do you think modern marketing transgresses this mitzvah?  
Come up with some brutally honest marketing for some popular contemporary products.
- Israelis usually get a bad rap for being brash and “in your face”. They will tell you that our polite society is not genuine. Do you think the “hello howzit” crowd is fundamentally dishonest? How could we interact more honestly?

## 10. Don’t covet

- We often spend too much time wishing we had what others have.  
Share two things that you feel grateful for.
- Discuss: Is it ever acceptable to feel envious of others?

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<sup>1</sup> All the commentaries concur that “Do not steal” in the Ten Commandments actually refers to kidnapping.



## The Amazing race

Follow the clues below and see if you can get navigate all the hurdles before anyone else.

1. Where is the name יהוה-י mentioned in the Torah for the first time?
2. How long did Joseph live?
3. What was Pharaoh's first decree against the Children of Israel?
4. Identify three differences between the two versions of the Ten Commandments.
5. What sign did the Jews look for to know when to travel while they were in the desert? [Clue: Last chapter of Book of Shemos]
6. Where would you find a small Alef in the Torah?
7. What did a Biblical farmer do with every tenth sheep in his flock? [Clue, 27<sup>th</sup> chapter, Vayikra]
8. Who was the head of the tribe of Shimon when Hashem counted the Jews in the desert?
9. What process did the Levi'im undergo before they could serve in the Temple? [Clue: Coming up this Shabbos]
10. Who were the five famous women who introduced a landmark law of inheritance to Judaism? [Clue: End of 4<sup>th</sup> book of the Torah]
11. How many days travel is it from Mt. Sinai (oh, and by the way, what is Sinai's other name?) to "Kadesh Barnea"? [Clue: It's one of the first things that Moshe talks about in his review of the 40 years in the desert.]
12. What is the last word in the Torah?
13. What two promises did Hashem give Yehoshua (Joshua) when he became leader of the Jewish nation?
14. What did Joshua and Joseph have in common at the end of their lives?
15. Who killed Eglon, king of Moav? What was unique about how he killed him? [Clue: Book of Judges, 3<sup>rd</sup> chapter]
16. Which woman led the Jewish nation (for 40 years)? [Clue: Next chapter]
17. Who was dedicated as a Nazir even before his birth? [Clue: Haftarah, last Shabbos]
18. Who taught us how to daven the Amidah? [Clue: Haftarah, first day of Rosh Hashanah]
19. How did King Saul die? [Clue: End of Shmuel I]
20. How long was King David king in Chevron before becoming king of all Israel [Clue: 2<sup>nd</sup> chapter, Shmuel II]
21. What drama unfolded just before King David died, which potentially threatened his legacy? [Clue, opening section of Kings I]
22. How did the prophet Isaiah (Yeshaya) compare the Jewish nation to an ox in his very first address to them?
23. The prophet Jeremiah (Yirmiyahu) is introduced as a person who became a prophet from when?
24. What are the four forms depicted on the Heavenly Throne? [Clue: Haftarah this Yom Tov]
25. What is the message of the first Tehillim?
26. What is unique about the pattern of verses in Tehillim 119?
27. What was Ruth's father-in-law's name?
28. Who was King David's grandfather? [Clue: Ruth was his great-grandmother]

Advanced: Moving to Mishnah:

29. When is the right time to say the evening Shema?
30. If something bad happens, G-d forbid, Torah expects you to \_\_\_\_\_. [Clue: End of Berachos]
31. What is the first law that the Mishnah teaches about Shabbos?
32. What are the three ways to marry a woman?
33. There are four major forms of damage that a person is responsible to pay for. List them. [Clue: Bava Kama]
34. List three lessons that the first chapter of Pirkei Avot teaches us about study.



# Likkutei Sichot: Shavuos

Translated by [Eliyahu Touger](#) / Reflection questions in bold, by Eliyahu Sasson

## Sleeping Soundly

The *Midrash* states<sup>1</sup> that the Jews slept the entire night before the giving of the Torah, “because sleep on Shavuos is pleasant and the night is short.... Not even a flea bit them.”

When G-d came to give them the Torah, He found the Jews in deep slumber, and had to rouse them. This is alluded to in the verse:<sup>2</sup> “Why did I come when no one was there? I called, and there was no answer.”

To compensate for the nation’s slumber on the night before the giving of the Torah, it is customary to remain awake on the first night of Shavuos, studying the Torah.<sup>3</sup>

### **Why is it customary to stay up on the first night of Shavuos?**

All the stories in the Torah serve as lessons for us in our Divine service. This is especially true with regard to any story which casts the Jews in an unfavourable light. The Torah is careful not to speak deprecatingly even about a non-kosher animal.<sup>4</sup> So if it tells a story which portrays the Jews unfavourably, we can assume that this is done only because a unique lesson can be derived from that story.

The lesson in this case is apparent: that we should compensate for our ancestors’ conduct by staying awake the entire night of Shavuos. To communicate this lesson, however, it would have been enough to summarize the story. The fact that our Sages added phrases such as: “Sleep on Shavuos is pleasant and the night is short.... Not even a flea bit them,” indicates that these particulars contain lessons aside from the one which encourages us to remain awake on Shavuos night.

### **What additional phrases from the Sages contain lessons for the night of Shavuos?**

## In Anxious Expectation

It is well known<sup>5</sup> that the promise that they would receive the Torah 50 days after their exodus from Egypt awakened a strong desire within the Jews. With great anticipation, they counted the days until the Torah would be given. This is the source for the *mitzvah* of counting the *omer*.

Now, if seven weeks beforehand the Jews could hardly wait to receive the Torah, we can assume that their desire increased as they approached the actual date. They knew G-d was going to give the Torah on the next day. How then was it possible for them to sleep?

### **Why would it have made sense for the Jews to stay up the first night of Shavuos?**



Moreover, their counting for 49 days *prepared* them for G-d's great gift. On each of these days they became more refined, and more worthy to receive the Torah. And on each of these 49 days, they drew down one of the 50 Gates of Understanding. Thus on the forty-ninth day, they had completed drawing down the 49 gates — the maximum possible through the Divine service of mortals for the fiftieth gate was to be opened by G-d at Mt. Sinai.

When one considers that the Jews had a burning desire for the Torah even while under the influence of Egypt's 49 Gates of Impurity, we can understand how overwhelming this desire must have become by the time they had refined themselves in drawing down the 49 Gates of Understanding,<sup>6</sup> making themselves worthy of G-d's priceless gift.

With such a great desire, does it make sense that the people would go to sleep?!

We are forced to conclude that even while sleeping, they did not take their minds off the giving of the Torah. Indeed, they went to sleep *in preparation* for the event.

This is also indicated by the fact that the fleas did not bite them. If going to sleep was a deviation from the Torah, G-d would not have wrought a miracle to enable them to sleep so soundly. The fact that He did implies that this sleep was also part of the nation's preparation.

**Why is it logical to conclude that the Jews going to sleep was an intentional and logical part of their preparation to receive the Torah, and not simply because of fatigue?**

**What is implied by the fact that the "fleas did not bite them"?**

## Reaching Upward

To explain: The Alter Rebbe writes<sup>7</sup> that no matter how high a level of understanding a person achieves, or how deep an attachment to G-dliness, since each soul exists within a body, there is no way that a mortal can attain the kind of connection to G-d that the soul enjoyed in its incorporeal state. The human body simply cannot bear that degree of connection.

When a person sleeps, the soul disengages itself from the body to a certain degree and "ascends" to the spiritual realms,<sup>8</sup> leaving only a trace of vitality in the body.<sup>9</sup> Therefore the sleeper's soul can grasp a higher level of G-dliness than it can while it is awake and functioning within the body.

For this reason, those people who devote themselves arduously to the study of Torah during the day receive revelations regarding their study at night.<sup>10</sup> At times, matters left unresolved during the previous day become clear by morning, based on the revelation experienced by the soul while the body was asleep.

**What spiritual advantage does the soul experience while sleeping?**

**Why do these advantages manifest themselves during sleep, as opposed to when awake?**



This is why the Jews went to sleep before the giving of the Torah. They wanted their souls to become disengaged from the realm of corporeal experience and thus be able to grasp even higher spiritual levels. This, they thought, would better prepare them for the revelations to be experienced at the giving of the Torah.

This is implied by the *Midrash's* words: "Sleep on Shavuot is pleasant and the night is short." The more a person labours to refine himself while awake, when the soul is fully enclothed in a body, the higher the level of revelation experienced during sleep. After the counting of the 49 days, the "night" grew "short"; only a little of the world's darkness remained. For all the preparatory work had been completed, and the great revelation was imminent. At such a time, "sleep is pleasant," for very high levels can be reached.

Moreover, the spiritual peaks which the Jews reached by sleeping that night affected their environment to the extent that no other living beings disturbed their slumber.<sup>11</sup>

**Why then did the Jews choose to sleep on the first night of Shavuot? How did they believe sleep would benefit them?**

## The Purpose of the Giving of the Torah

But G-d was not pleased with the sleep of the Jewish people before their receipt of the Torah, for this was not the proper manner in which to approach the event.

As mentioned on many occasions,<sup>12</sup> the giving of the Torah was a new development in comparison to the observance of the *mitzvos* by the Patriarchs. After the giving of the Torah, the *mitzvos* would have a permanent effect on the physical substances with which they were performed, imbuing them with holiness.

The peak of our Divine service is achieved, not by abandoning the body, but by *involving* it.<sup>13</sup> It is through such efforts that a connection is established with G-d's essence; this cannot be achieved by a non-corporeal soul. Indeed, the advantage of Divine service carried out within the body is so great that G-d and the Heavenly Court make themselves dependent on the rulings of a mortal court. G-d tells us: "You have triumphed over Me, My children,"<sup>14</sup> for "the Torah is not in the heavens."<sup>15</sup>

Since the purpose of the giving of the Torah was to accentuate the advantage of the Divine service performed while the soul is enclothed within the body, the preparatory service must parallel that objective; not to sleep and rise above the body, but to work with it. (This applies even though, at that time, before the giving of the Torah, there was still a decree separating the material from the spiritual.<sup>16</sup>)

**Why, though well-intentioned, was the sleep of the Jews misguided? What did Hashem really want, and what lesson in our lives can be gleaned from their mistake?**



## No Man Can Remain an Island

There are those who ask: "Why must I have anything to do with the darkness of the world? Why must I become involved with material things? I would rather cut myself off from all that and devote myself to studying Torah and perfecting my Divine service undisturbed by others."

Such people are saying that they have approached the level of Shavuot, when the "night" — the darkness of our world — is "short." They want to reach the highest peaks (for "the sleep of Shavuot is sweet") and not be disturbed by the "fleas" in their environment.

They must know that even before the Torah was given — indeed, on the very day it was given — such an approach was contrary to G-d's intent. And indeed, we are still compensating for this error today, as we strive to make a dwelling for G-d in this lower world. Surely, this applies after the giving of the Torah, when our efforts must involve setting aside time to share with other Jews, even if they are on a lower level. And we must realize that we ourselves will also benefit from this sharing, as we are taught: "From my students, [I received] more than from all others."<sup>17</sup>

This is the reason we do not sleep on Shavuot, the night before we receive the Torah. It is not merely to compensate for the shortcoming of our ancestors. It is because staying awake is part of the preparation for receiving the Torah.

The proper approach is to involve ourselves with the body, the animal soul, and one's portion in the world. In this manner, one prepares oneself to receive the Torah with a joy that continues throughout the year.

(Adapted from *Sichos Chag HaShavuot*, 5722)

**What, having learned from the mistake of the Jews the first night of Shavuot, is the proper approach to Judaism and connecting to G-d in one's life?**

**What can we do in our own lives to internalize and bring to action the lessons of the first night of Shavuot?**



## The Shepherd Who Became King

*King David passed away on the festival of Shavuot, in the year 2924 (837 BCE).*

In Bethlehem in Judea there once lived a noble and respected Jew, whose name was Jesse. He had eight clever, talented sons, the youngest of whom was David. David was a very modest youth, and he looked after his father's flocks. In his heart burned an ardent love for G-d and of His people, which he expressed in the Psalms he composed and in playing on the lyre.

He also felt a deep love for his lambs and for every living creature. Whenever he brought out his flocks to pasture, he led the young lambs to graze among the fresh, tender young grasses, for they had not yet any teeth.

When the young lambs had nibbled the delicate tips, he next took there the oldest sheep and cows, whose teeth were old and weak, that they might eat the middle part of the stalks which were soft enough for them. Last of all he used to bring to the field the grown sheep and cattle, whose strong teeth could chew the lowest part of the grass nearest to the roots.

He had great physical courage and was not afraid of any wild animal. Indeed; he feared nothing and no one, except G-d alone. And whenever a lion or bear attacked his flocks and herds and wished to seize a sheep or a cow, David would rush at the savage beast and chase it away and rescue its prey.

G-d, therefore, said: "One who can so faithfully tend his animals, each according to its needs, I can safely entrust with the care of My holy lambs, My people."

The prophet Samuel was greatly distressed that King Saul had disappointed his hopes in the war against Amalek and had as a result shown himself unworthy of his crown. But G-d said to Samuel: "Put an end to your tears! Go to Bethlehem and there anoint one of Jesse's sons as the future king. The Hebrew kingdom will remain with him and his children and children's children forever, for he is truly fitted for it."

The prophet Samuel came to Bethlehem and informed Jesse of G-d's command. Jesse had his sons brought before the prophet one at a time. Samuel wished to anoint the eldest son, who was handsome and clever and had a noble character. But G-d said to him: "This is not the one!"



He therefore wanted to anoint the second, but the oil vanished from the anointing horn, so the prophet Samuel understood that this son, too, was not to be the future king. And so it happened with each one in turn. Samuel found himself in difficulties. He understood that G-d was punishing him for having exclaimed once: "I am the seer (prophet)" and now he was unable to 'see' who was to be the future king.

"Have you another son?" the prophet Samuel asked Jesse.

"Yes," replied Jesse, "my youngest son, David, is in the field, looking after my flocks..."

Samuel asked that David be immediately brought to him and, as soon as he stood before him, the oil rose in the horn. Samuel then heard G-d's voice, declaring: "This is the one I have chosen." Thereupon the prophet anointed David as the king who was to succeed Saul, and Samuel returned home.

What effect did this have on David? Did he become proud? Did he dress himself in royal robes? Not at all! He went back to his sheep. But a heavenly spirit surrounded him. His prayers, his Psalms and his music, full of this Divine spirit, traveled and spread across the hills of Judah, and whoever heard them felt as if a new soul had awakened in him. The sad person was filled with joy; the downcast felt his heart revive; he who had lost hope regained his faith and all exclaimed: "Listen! It is David, the son of Jesse, who is singing!"

And when King Saul fell into a mood of despair, he was told that there was a wonderful youth whose playing on the harp and whose singing drove away all evil spirits. From that time David used to play and sing before King Saul, calming and comforting him.

Even later, when King David had ascended the throne, he always kept his harp beside him. Exactly at midnight a slight breeze used to pluck at the strings, and King David would awaken from his sleep, rise from his couch and compose sweet, sacred songs, known to us as the Psalms of David, in praise of G-d.

King David's fame spread to the neighboring nations. He set himself to the task of establishing peace, and the kings around wished to make peace treaties with him. To the north-west of the land of Israel lay the kingdom of Tyre, famous for its craftsmen, the ruler of which was Hiram. Hiram, king of Tyre, sent his best builders and artists to erect a splendid palace for King David and to build beautiful mansions in David's new capital of Jerusalem.



King David should have been contented, but he was disturbed by the thought, that, while his palace and his capital city were now built with great splendour, the holy Ark of G-d still lodged in a tent, screened only by curtains. David knew that Jerusalem was to be the center which was to unite Jews everywhere with the idea of one G-d, one Torah and one People. David, therefore, determined to build the *Beit Hamikdash*, the Holy Temple.

However, there came to him the prophet Nathan, sent by G-d, and said: "Your good intention comes from a pure heart. Nevertheless, the task of building a Sanctuary for G-d is not to be given to you. The Sanctuary is to be the place of peace. You fought many battles. Your hands have had to shed blood in these wars, the blood of wicked men, it is true, but still human blood. Therefore you cannot build G-d's Sanctuary of peace. This holy duty will be carried out by your son, Solomon, whose reign will be one of peace (the name, Solomon, "Shlomo," having its origin in the Hebrew word for peace, *Shalom*). He will put into practice this good intention of yours."

Naturally, King David had to accept G-d's prophecy, as spoken by the mouth of the prophet Nathan, although he deeply regretted that his eyes would never see the House of G-d in all its magnificence. But he rejoiced that his son would be considered worthy of the great honor of building the Holy Temple..

In spite of the knowledge that he himself was not to have a hand in this sacred work, David began to collect the materials needed for the building as well as money to pay for it. All the treasures he had assembled during his reign, gold and silver and copper, precious stones and wood, he had placed in the care of a man called Shabuel, a direct descendant of Moses, who was appointed to take charge of this treasury.

Not only were the building materials prepared by King David, but he also arranged, with the help of the *Sanhedrin* (Rabbinical Supreme Court), who were inspired by the Divine spirit, the order of the service for the Kohanim and the Levites. Thus King Solomon later had before him a complete plan in addition to the materials necessary for the building of the Holy Temple.

David's reign lasted for forty years (2884-2924); the first seven years he reigned in Hebron over the tribe of Judah, and the remaining thirty-three years he reigned in Jerusalem over all Israel.

Excerpted from *The Complete Story of Shavuot*, published and copyright by Kehot Publication Society, Brooklyn NY



## Connecting learning to practice: Practical resolutions for a better future

The Torah asks, what is better? Learning Torah or doing mitzvos? Learning Torah! For through learning one comes to action. Any time we sit down to learn, especially at such an auspicious and special time as Shavuos, the giving of the Torah, our learning must be framed in such a way that we are brought to an increase in the breadth and depth of our deeds, our fulfillment of Hashem's commandments. As such, please feel encouraged to use this learning packet, and the inspiration therein, to motivate yourself, family, and friends, to connect your learning with practical action. Peruse the "menu" below, find something concrete and practical you think is within your grasp, and **resolve** to bring the inspiration, learning, and joy of Shavuos into the rest of the year through a positive resolution. Like all good resolutions, make it specific, manageable, and limited, and don't be afraid to ask your Rabbi for help!



With gratitude to the Johannesburg Learning Institute for the numerous Torah learning opportunities being made available to the community.



# practical resolutions

## LEARNING

Daily portion of parsha  
Weekly learning session with a friend  
Attend a shiur

## PRAYER

Tefillin every day for 10 minutes  
Morning blessings  
Shema 2X day (morning & night)

## SHABBAT

Lighting candles on time  
Kiddush and meal as a family  
No work involvement

## KASHRUT

Making a kosher kitchen (separate meat & milk)  
Using only kosher meat

## TZEDAKAH

Putting a tzedaka pushka in your home  
Giving one coin a day

