



KMS Family Parsha

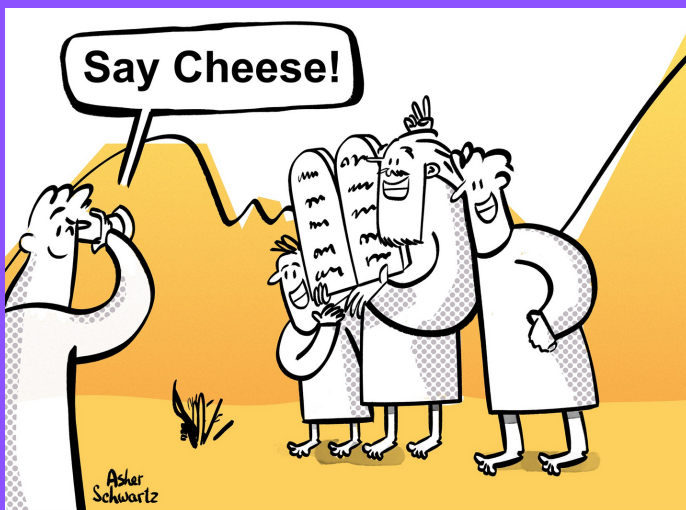
LEARN ABOUT THE PARSHA WITH THE KMS YOUTH DEPARTMENT
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בַּמִּדְבָּר/שְׁבוּעוֹת - BaMidbar/Shavuot
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PARSHA QUESTIONS

ANSWERS ARE ON THE BACK

- 1) Why does Hashem count the Jewish People so often?
- 2) What is Techum Shabbat?
- 3) What was the sum total of the counting of the 12 tribes?
- 4) Where in the parsha do we learn that a teacher is like a parent?
- 5) Why did the Leviyim receive Maaser Rishon?
- 6) What is the meaning of "אוֹי לְרָשָׁע אוֹי לְשֹׁכֵן" and "טוֹב לְצַדִּיק טוֹב לְשֹׁכֵן"?
- 7) The firstborn males of the Jewish People were redeemed for 5 shekalim. Why 5 shekalim?
- 8) The Leviyim were selected rather than whom to serve Hashem? Why?
- 9) What Megillah do we read on the 2nd day of Shavuot, and who wrote it?
- 10) Why do many people have the minhag to eat dairy foods on Shavuot?



The origin of Shavuot

WHAT WOULD YOU DO?

Discussion starter for your Shabbat table..

If you could ask Moshe Rabbeinu one question about Matan Torah what would you ask?

DID YOU KNOW?

Learning Torah All Night Shavuot Night (Aish.com).

One of few customs we do have on Shavuot is staying up all night studying. The classic reason given for this is because on the morning of the revelation at Mount Sinai the Children of Israel overslept. God descended onto the mountain to give us His Torah but we hadn't yet arrived! Moses had to rouse us from our tents to bring us to that climactic event. To make up for our failing, we stay up the first night of Shavuot every year to make absolutely certain we will be awake already in the morning.

Anyone who has experienced the night-long study of Shavuot will recognize the irony of this reasoning. Look around the synagogue when that momentous event is recounted during the Torah reading - and half the synagogue is asleep! In our eagerness to atone for our lapse at Mount Sinai, we undertake a practice which almost certainly guarantees we will not be more than semi-conscious the morning of the big event. Why take on a practice so seemingly irrational and counterproductive?

...The Sages often describe the Revelation at Sinai as a wedding. God was the groom; we were the bride. The mountain held over our heads was the wedding canopy. God was not just giving us commandments to perform, a means of earning reward for our good behavior. He was offering us an eternal connection with Him.

...We stay up Shavuot night because one night a year we make precisely that assertion: God, You have granted us the ultimate gift of your Torah and we are crazy about it. We want to understand You and know Your ways. And we will go to every length to get there. The rest of the year we will be normal and live with the proper balance, but this one day of the year we cannot get enough.

PARSHA ANSWERS

- 1) Rashi 1:1 - Hashem counts us because He loves us so much.
- 2) Rashi 2:2 - Techum Shabbat is the prohibition against traveling more than 2,000 amot on Shabbat. All the Shevatim camped within 2,000 amot of the Ohel Moed.
- 3) 2:32 - 603,550 men between 20 and 60 years old.
- 4) Rashi 3:1 - The pasuk says וְאַלֶּה תוֹלְדֵי אֶהְרֶן וּמֹשֶׁה and then lists Aharon's children. Moshe, their teacher, is also like a parent.
- 5) Rashi 3:8 - Since the Leviyim served in the Mishkan in place of everyone else they received tithes as payment.
- 6) Rashi 3:29 and 3:38 - The people we spend time with can influence us for good or bad. Korach was camped near Datan and Aviram (who got caught up in his rebellion) and Moshe was camped near Yehuda, Yissachar, and Zevulun (who were inspired by his Torah learning).
- 7) Rashi 3:46 - To atone for the sale of Yosef, Rachel's firstborn, who was sold by his brothers for 5 shekalim (20 pieces of silver.)
- 8) The Bechorim were chosen as Hashem's special ones in Egypt when the firstborn of all the Egyptians were killed. When they sinned with the golden calf they were replaced by the Leviyim.
- 9) We read Megillat Rut, written by Shmuel HaNavi.
- 10) At the time of Matan Torah, Bnei Yisrael did not yet know the Kashrut laws concerning the preparation of meat so they kept to the safer option and only ate dairy foods.

ELISHEVA'S PARSHA CHALLAH



Challah for Shavuot
Chag Sameach!

This week we start a new book of the Torah. It opens with a census of the people and a description of the way they camped in the desert. Each tribe had a specific plot and unique flag that was displayed where they lived. In the center of the camp was the Mishkan. Hashem's Shechina was at the center of the Jewish people's lives.

I depicted the flag of the tribe of Levi since we, the Levitts, are a part of that tribe. It struck me how poignant it is that we learn about the structure of how the Jewish people lived in the desert. Just as the Mishkan was the center of their camp, so too are our Shuls the centers of our communities. Our shuls are a place where we are together, where we celebrate unity, and where we look for guidance, support, love, and comfort when we need it.

DVAR TORAH

Shavuot: Always Receiving (Chief Rabbi Warren Goldstein)

Arguably, no festival embodies this idea quite like Shavuot, which is the anniversary of the giving of the Torah exactly 3 331 years ago. The Kli Yakar points out that when the Torah calls on us to celebrate the festival of Shavuot, it does so without mentioning it is the anniversary of the giving of the Torah at all. We infer that Shavuot is the anniversary of the giving of the Torah from the date on which the festival takes place (the 6th of Sivan), but there's no explicit mention of it. Why would the defining dimension of Shavuot not be directly stated by the Torah?

He answers that the Torah did not want us to fixate on one day as the anniversary of the giving of the Torah, to relate to this day as a memory of the distant past.

Our relationship with the Torah is immediate and visceral. We receive it – we incorporate it into our lives – each and every day. When the Jewish people are approaching Mount Sinai to receive the Torah, the verse says, “In the third month of the children of Israel leaving the land of Egypt, on this day they arrived in the desert of Sinai.” Rashi notes that it says “this day” and not “that day”. “That day” would imply an event in the past, “this day” implies that it's happening today. Right now. Let us stop for a moment now and realise that at this moment in time we are actively receiving the Torah from God.

The Shema speaks about “these words that I command you today” (Deuteronomy 6:6). Rashi, on that verse says, that “today” means that the words of Torah should always feel as new and fresh to us as the day they were given. This is not some ancient, dusty manuscript stored away in a museum somewhere. This is a living Torah, a Torat Chaim. It gives us our mission and purpose, direction and guidance on how to live and why to live, and what our ideals are. It is something of immediate relevance, every moment of every day.

The Talmud cites the verse in Proverbs which compares our relationship with the Torah to a suckling infant with its mother, the more we draw out of it, the more life-giving nutrients are produced. The Torah is an endless reservoir of spiritual sustenance, no matter how deep you go, you can always go deeper. A small child, for example, can learn the first verse of the Book of Bereishit: “In the beginning God created Heaven and Earth”, and understand it in a very basic way. And the greatest Torah sage of the generation can learn that same verse with all of its nuances and mystical meanings in a much deeper way. In each case, it's the same Torah being learnt. But there's always something new in it.

There's a unique offering which was brought in the Temple on Shavuot – two loaves of bread, made from the newly ripened first grains of the wheat harvest. The Torah calls this offering the Mincha Chadasha – the “new offering”. Why this focus on newness? By now, the reason should be clear. Shavuot is a celebration of freshness and renewal. It's a celebration of renewed inspiration and renewed challenge. It's a celebration of Torah, today.

We must live life dynamically, not statically. We do not remain in frozen perfection like the angels, we struggle constantly to become better people. We do not remain set in what we know and what we've experienced, we must always search in Torah for new knowledge and fresh inspiration. This is the way God wants us to live – and He sets the example. As we say in the morning prayer service, God “renews the works of creation in His goodness, at every moment of the day, always”.

And just as God recreates the world from afresh, moment by moment, every single day, we should be recreating our own personal world on a similar basis, always looking for renewed inspiration, receiving the Torah into our lives that is as fresh as the day it was given.

Shavuot is a great place to start.