

SHAVUOS DINIM AND CUSTOMS

Trees and Greenery

The Rema cites a minhag to adorn our Shuls and homes with greens and trees in commemoration of *Matan Torah*. The Torah specifically warns not to allow the animals to graze on the mountain. Additionally on Shavuos the fruits of the trees are judged; therefore, we bring the trees into our homes and Shuls in order to be *mispallel* for them.

The various greens and flowers that decorate our shuls and homes are not muktza and may be moved. If flowers were in water at the outset of Yom Tov and taken out, they may be replaced if they are the type of flowers that were totally open. Flowers that were not totally open may not be put back into water even if they were in the water prior to Yom Tov. In the event that you forgot to put flowers into the water prior to Yom Tov, you may not fill up a vase and insert them on Yom Tov.

Dairy Foods

The Rema cites a custom to eat dairy on the first day of Shavuos. Numerous explanations are cited for this *minhag*. The Rema himself says that just as on Pesach we cook two different dishes in remembrance of the *Korban Chagiga* and *Korban Pesach*, similarly we require two different breads on Shavuos in remembrance of the *Shte Lechem* which were brought on Shavuos. In order to create a need for the two loaves of bread, we eat *Milchig* and then *Fleishig* meal since one cannot use the same bread for both meals.

The *Mishna Berura* mentions a requirement of a new tablecloth when having the *Fleishig* meal although there is no need to say *Birkas Hamazon* after the *Milchig* meal. The *Shulchan Aruch* in *Yoreh Deah* requires one to rinse out his mouth and eat something *parve* before having the meat meal.

Another reason for eating a *Milchig* meal on Shavuos is advanced by Rabbeinu Sadiyah Gaon. He says that after the Jews accepted the Torah at Har Sinai, they were unable to eat meat due to the fact that with the newly acquired laws, the preparation of the animal would have taken an enormous amount of time. Klal Yisrael opted instead to prepare *Milchig* food, which was much easier.

Halachos for One Who Stays Up the Entire Night

For those who have not slept at all:

- 1) The blessings *Al Netilas Yadaim* and *Asher Yatzar* may be said only after going to the bathroom.
- 2) The following blessings should not be said: a) *Al Mitzvos Tzitzis* b) the blessings on Torah study c) *Elokei Neshoma* d) *Hama'avir Shina*.

If possible, one should hear someone else (who has slept during the night) say them and intend to fulfill his obligation by listening to the recitation of the blessings. (The individual who is saying the blessings must also have in mind to allow the listeners to fulfill their obligation through his recitation.) If there is no one to recite these blessings, then the blessing for the *talis gadol* can be used to cover the *talis katan* as well; and the blessing of *Ahava Raba* can cover the blessings for Torah study if one specifically has so in mind and if immediately upon termination of the *Shmoneh Esrei* one recites some Torah passages.

Selected & Relevant Halachos of Yom Tov

Showering & Bathing – It is permitted to heat water on Yom Tov (in a permissible fashion) to wash one's hands, face and feet. Only liquid soap is permitted. It is permitted to wash other parts of one's body on Yom Tov even with hot water provided that you don't wash most of the body. However, it is not proper to wash all or most of one's body even with cold water. If, however, you don't wash your entire body at once, but limb by limb, you may use water either heated **prior to Yom Tov** or cold water. Additionally, if you are in a situation of great discomfort, e.g. sweated from a long walk from a Simcha on a hot day, you may wash your entire body at once using cold water. Of course, you must be careful not to squeeze water out of your hair. One would additionally be permitted to turn on the hot water to bathe a child who soiled part of his/her body.

Hachana Issues –

1. One is not permitted to set the table on the first day of Yom Tov for the night time meal.
2. A food that was in the freezer and is needed for the night time meal may not be removed and defrosted, unless removing it later will cause an undue delay in eating the meal. One should be mindful to remove it early enough in the day so that it could be potentially ready for that day as well.
3. One may not carry clothing or books or other items on the first day of Yom Tov if these items will be needed for the second day.

Our Mara D'asra, Rabbi Uri Orlian is available to answer any questions (646) 369-6017