

## Shavuos

### Staying Awake All Night

- On Shavuos night there is a widespread custom for men to stay awake learning Torah, after which they daven Shacharis at *vasikin*.<sup>1</sup>
- A reason for this is given by the Midrash, which explains that Hashem had to wake up Klal Yisrael prior to giving the Torah, when really they should have been awake in anticipation. We make up for this by staying awake on this night in a display of eagerness for *kabbalas haTorah*.<sup>2</sup>
- The Arizal wrote that anyone who stays awake on this night learning Torah is assured that he will live out the year and suffer no harm.<sup>3</sup>

### Maariv

- **Ahavah Rabbah.** If you took a nap on Erev Shavuos, you should have in mind during the berachah of Ahavah Rabbah at Maariv (in *birchos krias Shema*) that it should be a fulfillment of your obligation of *birchos haTorah*.<sup>4</sup> In order for your berachah to take effect, either learn a few lines of Torah immediately after Maariv, or repeat any *pasuk* during your recitation of *krias Shema* (excluding the *pasuk* of Shema Yisrael). Doing this ensures that your learning until Shacharis is covered by a *birchos haTorah*, as some *poskim* hold that your nap that day obligated you to recite a new berachah.
- **Havdalah.** On *motzei Shabbos* Shavuos, the *tefillah* "ותודיענו" is inserted in Shemoneh Esrei at Maariv.

### Zemanim

- Important times to be aware of (applicable in Yerushalayim 2023):<sup>5</sup>
  - *alos hashachar* (dawn) — 3:50
  - *zeman tzitzis* — 4:39
  - *neitz hachamah* (sunrise) — 5:37

### Eating and drinking

- The guidelines for eating and drinking during the early morning hours are as follows:
  - Until a half hour before *alos hashachar* (3:20) you can eat or drink anything.<sup>6</sup>
  - During the half hour before *alos* you cannot begin eating bread or *mezonos* foods. If you started eating them beforehand, you can continue until *alos hashachar*.<sup>7</sup> Drinks and other foods are permitted.
  - After *alos hashachar* you cannot eat or drink anything<sup>8</sup> except water, tea, or coffee to enable you to daven better.<sup>9</sup>

### Netilas Yadayim

- **When.** After *alos hashachar* you need to wash *negel vassar* to remove the רע רוח that rests on your hands.<sup>10</sup> If at that time you are in the middle of learning, you aren't required to interrupt; you can wait until before davening to wash.<sup>11</sup>

- **Berachah.** In order to make the berachah of *al netilas yadayim* after staying up all night, you should use the bathroom before washing.<sup>12</sup> If that's not possible, don't make the berachah; rather, wait to be *yotzei* with someone else.

### Asher Yatzar

- Say *asher yatzar* if you use the bathroom. If you don't need to use the bathroom, it is preferable to be *yotzei* with the one reciting the berachah out loud before Shacharis.<sup>13</sup>

### Birchos hashachar

- All of *birchos hashachar* can be said except: 1) Elokai Neshamah and 2) Hama'avir Sheinah with its *yehi ratzon*.<sup>14</sup> However, to avoid confusion, one person makes the berachos and everyone is *yotzei* by listening (through *שומע כעונה*).
- When listening to the berachah of Hama'avir Sheinah, be careful to say amen only at the conclusion of the *yehi ratzon*, after the words "*hagomel chasadim tovim l'amo Yisrael*."<sup>15</sup>
- You should not say "ברוך הוא וברוך שמו" when being *yotzei* a berachah with someone else.

### Birchos HaTorah

- You cannot say *birchos haTorah* after staying awake all night. Rather, be *yotzei* with the one reciting it on behalf of everyone else.<sup>16</sup>
  - **How.** Listen to the recitation of the berachah and have in mind to be *yotzei*. Don't answer amen after the words "לעסוק בדברי תורה" Rather, say amen after "המלמד תורה לעמו ישראל" and "נותן התורה".<sup>17</sup> Immediately after the chazzan concludes the berachos, say "ברכה" and "אלו דברים" as usual.
- **Ahavah Rabbah.** If you didn't listen to someone else's recitation of *birchos haTorah*, you should have in mind to be *yotzei* with the berachah of Ahavah Rabbah, and then learn a few lines of Torah immediately after Shacharis.<sup>18</sup>
  - **Forgot.** If you forgot to have this in mind during Ahavah Rabbah, you are nevertheless *yotzei b'dieved*, and you must learn a few lines of Torah immediately after Shacharis.<sup>19</sup>
- **Slept on Erev Shavuos.** If you slept for at least a half hour on Erev Shavuos in a bed, you can say *birchos haTorah* on your own before Shacharis on Shavuos morning.<sup>20</sup>

### Tzitzis

- You cannot make a berachah on the tzitzis you have been wearing if you stayed awake all night. You can either:
  1. Switch to a new pair and make a berachah on it; or
  2. You can be *yotzei* with somebody else who is making a berachah on their tallis.<sup>21</sup>
- The berachah on your tzitzis can only be made after *zeman tzitzis* (4:39).<sup>22</sup>

1. מ"ב (תצד:סק"א) 2. שם 3. שם 4. מ"ב (מז:סק"יג) 5. לוח עתים לבינה 6. מ"ב (פט:סק"ז) 7. שם 8. מ"ב (פט:סק"ח) 9. מ"ב (פט:סק"ב) 10. רמ"א (ד:יג) 11. רב נבנצל 12. מ"ב (ד:סק"ל) 13. מ"ב (ד:סק"ג) 14. מ"ב (מו:סק"ד) 15. שו"ע (מו:א) 16. מ"ב (מז:סק"ח) 17. מ"ב (מז:סק"יב) 18. מ"ב (מז:סק"ח) 19. מ"ב (מז:סק"ד) 20. מ"ב (מז:סק"ח) 21. מ"ב (מז:סק"ח) 22. שו"ע (יח:ג)

## Partially Slept

- **Rule.** If you slept at some point of the night, the guidelines are as follows: If you slept a "proper sleep" (שינת קבע) you can say all of the berachos as usual. If you only took a nap (שינת ארעי), the above halachos of staying awake all night apply.
- **שינת קבע.** If you went to sleep in a bed for at least a half hour, it's considered as though you slept a "proper sleep," and you can recite all the berachos as usual. This is true even if you woke up from such a sleep before חצות הלילה (12:36).<sup>23</sup> However, in such a case (waking up before *chatzos*), follow the guidelines above for the berachos of *al netilas yadayim* and *asher yatzar*,<sup>24</sup> and the rest of the berachos can be said as usual.
- **שינת ארעי.** If you slept in your bed in your clothing, or put your head down to sleep on a table,<sup>25</sup> the status of your sleep depends on your intention:<sup>26</sup>
  - If you intended to sleep for several hours, it's considered שינת קבע.
  - If you intended to nap temporarily, its considered שינת ארעי even if you slept for hours.

## Hallel

- Extra effort should be made not to doze off while saying Hallel because the omission of one word prevents you from being *yotzei* your obligation to recite Hallel.

## After a Nap

If you nap after Shacharis on Shavuos mornings, the guidelines upon awakening are as follows:

- **Negel vasser.** You should wash your hands when you wake up (though without a berachah), as you should after a nap, to remove the רע.<sup>27</sup>
- **Birchos haTorah.** The widespread minhag is to **not** recite *birchos haTorah* after sleeping during the day.<sup>28</sup> However, HaRav Nebenzahl, *shlita*, holds that you should recite *birchos haTorah* after a daytime sleep that lasted for at least three hours.

## Other Minhagim

### Late Maariv

- The minhag is to delay davening Maariv until צאת הכוכבים on the night of Shavuos. We do so because we don't want to cut short the last day of counting the Omer. This ensures that we have a "complete" counting ("תמימות תהינה").<sup>29</sup>

### Megillas Rus

- Megillas Rus is read at Shacharis on the morning of Shavuos. One reason for this is that it contains the genealogy of David HaMelech, who was born and died on Shavuos.<sup>30</sup>

### Aseres HaDibros

- **Standing.** There is a widespread custom to stand for the *aliyah* that contains the Aseres HaDibros, as Klal Yisrael did at Har Sinai. HaRav Nebenzahl, *shlita*, holds that one should not stand so as not to show more honor to one section of the Torah than others. You should follow the custom of the minyan you are in.

## Dairy

- It is customary to eat dairy on Shavuos.<sup>31</sup> One reason given is that when Klal Yisrael accepted the Torah, they learned the halachos of kashrus. Their pots were therefore *treif*, and they had to eat dairy. As a remembrance of this, we eat dairy.<sup>32</sup>
- **Cheesecake.** Cheesecake is commonly served on Shavuos as a fulfillment of the minhag to eat dairy. The relevant halachos are as follows:
  - **Berachah rishonah.** Cheesecake usually contains flour (*mezonos*), yet different factors determine the correct berachah to recite over it.
    - If the flour and the cheese are baked together, the berachah is dependent on the purpose the flour serves:
      - If it's to add taste, the berachah is *mezonos*.
      - If it's to hold the cake together or for consistency, the berachah is *shehakol*.<sup>33</sup>
    - If the flour and cheese are baked separately:
      - Generally, it would require two separate berachos, one on each part (*mezonos* and then *shehakol*).<sup>34</sup>
  - **Berachah acharonah.** The *berachah acharonah* is usually *borei nefashos*, since a *k'zayis* of *mezonos* is not eaten within *k'dei achilas pras* (four minutes).<sup>35</sup>
  - **Kiddush B'Makom Seudah.** In general, in order to fulfill your obligation of Kiddush, you must eat a *k'zayis* of bread or *mezonos* immediately afterward. Only the *mezonos* part of the cheesecake is included in the amount to reach a *k'zayis*. Therefore, since the crust is often thin, it's recommended to eat another *mezonos* food in order to reach a *k'zayis*.

23. הליכות שלמה (ו:א). 24. ביה"ל (ד:יג ד"ה כל). 25. הליכות שלמה (שם)  
 26. ביצחק יקרא (מז:כג ד"ה במישב). 27. רמ"א (ד:טו). 28. אשי ישראל פ"ו הע' סה  
 29. מ"ב (תצד:סק"א). 30. טעמי מנהגים תרי"ט. 31. רמ"א (תצד:ג). 32. מ"ב  
 (תצד:סקי"ב). 33. שו"ע (רח:ג). 34. מ"ב (קס:סקמ"ה). 35. הל' ברכות ר' באדנער  
 רשימת ברכות עמ' 22