

Reb Pinchas of Koretz

Imrie Pinchas

Shavous

Siman #258	
"Her husband is known in the gates" (Proverbs 31:23).	נודע בשערים בעלה (משלי ל"א, כ"ג)
Each one [knows] according to what he estimates in his heart (Zohar II 103a).	לכל חד כפום מה דמשער בלביה (זהר חלק ב' דף (ק"ג עמוד א')
And for this reason the Omer was from barley — a term denoting measure —	ולזה הנה העמר משעורים, לשון שעור
for all the days of the Sefirah are [about] particularity.	שכל ימות הספירה הכל בפרטיות
But on Shavuot it is generality.	אבל בשבועות הוא כלליות
Therefore, the two loaves came from wheat —	לכן באו השתי הלחם מחטים
and "chitah" is numerically equivalent to 22 letters...	...ן"חטה" בגימטריא כ"ב אותיות
[NOTE: Summary This brief teaching interprets the verse "נודע בשערים בעלה" ("Her husband is known in the gates" – <i>Mishlei</i> 31:23) as referring to how each person understands Divinity — "<i>each one according to what he measures in his heart</i>" (Zohar II, 103a). It ties this idea to the Omer offering, which is brought from barley, a coarse grain symbolizing <i>individual measure and refinement</i>. The word <i>se'orim</i> (barley) is associated with <i>shiur</i> (measurement), suggesting that the days of Sefirat HaOmer are about particular refinement, day by day. In contrast, Shavuot represents generality and completeness, and so the offering is wheat bread — a higher, more refined grain — and the word חיטה (chitah) has the gematria of 22, representing the 22 letters of the Alef-Beis, alluding to the entirety of Torah communication. The key idea is that the Omer is the process of internal work, personalized and specific, while Shavuot is the moment of universal revelation, when all the details are unified into Divine clarity. END NOTE]	
Siman #259	
At the third meal of Parashat Naso, he, of blessed memory, spoke about the Hidden Light (Or HaGanuz),	בסעודה שלישית פרשת נשא דיבר הוא ז"ל מענין אור, הגנוז
and he said in the name of the Rav, of blessed memory, that the day of the giving of the Torah was 36 hours long,	ואמר בשם הרב ז"ל, שיום של מתן תורה הנה ארוך, ל"ו שעות
because with every utterance [of Hashem], they recoiled backward the length of their camp, three parasangs,	כי בכל דיבור חזרו לאחוריהם כארך מחניהם שלוש, פרסאות
only when returning were they carried by angels	רק בחזרה נשאום המלאכים
(as is written in <i>Shir HaShirim Rabbah</i> 5:2),	(שיר השירים רבה פרק ה', סימן ב')

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and even though in the piyut "Vekhol Sass Lulis" by Yosef of Sikrit it is written,	(וְאֵף שֶׁבְּפִיוֹט ("וְכָל סַעַס לְוִלִּים" לְסִקְרִית יוֹסֵף כ')
"they skip on the way, they skip on the return,"	כְּתוּב יְדוּדוֹן בְּהִלִּכָּה יְדוּדוֹן בְּחֻזְרָה
nevertheless, the carrying was only on the return, but on the way there they walked themselves.	מִכָּל מְקוֹם הַנְּשִׂיָּאָה הָיְתָה רַק בְּחֻזְרָה אֲבָל בְּהִלִּכָּה הֵלְכוּ בְּעַצְמָם
It turns out that they walked that whole day thirty parasangs.	נִמְצָא שֶׁהֵלְכוּ כָּל אוֹתוֹ הַיּוֹם שְׁלוּשִׁים פָּרָסָאוֹת
And the walking capacity of an average person in a day is ten parasangs (Pesachim 93b),	וּמִהֵלֵךְ אָדָם בִּינוּנִי בְּיוֹם עֲשָׂרָה פָּרָסָאוֹת (פְּסָחִים צ"ג),
we learn from this that the day was three times longer than a regular day — i.e., 36 hours.	נִשְׁמַע מִזֶּה מִיָּנָה דְּהֵיָּה הַיּוֹם אַרְבֵּעַ שְׁלוּשׁ פַּעַמִּים מִכָּל יוֹם, דְּהֵיָּינוּ ל"ו שָׁעוֹת
And these correspond to the 36 hours that the Hidden Light served Adam HaRishon	וְהֵם כְּנֻגַּד ל"ו שָׁעוֹת שֶׁשִּׁמַּשׁ אוֹר הַגָּנוּז לְאָדָם הָרִאשׁוֹן
(Bereishit Rabbah 12:6; also in <i>Yalkut Shimoni</i> Bereshit 11:3),	בְּרֵאשִׁית רַבָּה פָּרָק י"ב, סִימָן ו'; יְלָקוּט שְׁמַעוֹנִי), (בְּרֵאשִׁית רַמְז' א סִימָן ג'
and corresponding to this are 36 tractates, and the 36 candles of Chanukah.	וְכְנֻגַּד זֶה ל"ו מִסְכָּתוֹת וְל"ו נֵרוֹת שֶׁל חֲנֻכָּה
Therefore, one should light 36 candles on Shabbat,	וְעַל כֵּן יֵשׁ לְהַדְלִיק ל"ו נֵרוֹת בְּשַׁבָּת
and that is why the day of Matan Torah was 36 hours,	וְעַל כֵּן הָיָה אוֹתוֹ הַיּוֹם שֶׁל מַתַּן תּוֹרָה ל"ו שָׁעוֹת
for the Torah itself is the Hidden Light.	כִּי הַתּוֹרָה בְּעַצְמָהּ הִיא אוֹר הַגָּנוּז
[NOTE: Summary] This profound teaching—delivered at a <i>seudah shlishit</i> on Parashat Naso—connects the length of the day of Matan Torah with the concept of the Or HaGanuz ("Hidden Light"). It states that the day the Torah was given lasted 36 hours, three times longer than a regular day. Why? Because with each Divine utterance at Sinai,	

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Bnei Yisrael were overwhelmed and thrown back three *parsa'ot*, and had to walk forward again on their own. Only on the return were they carried by angels.

Walking thirty *parsa'ot* in one day would normally require three days' worth of time, hence the 36-hour day. This corresponds to the 36 hours during which Adam HaRishon experienced the Hidden Light before it was concealed, as described in Bereishit Rabbah 12:6. The number 36 also appears in Torah: 36 tractates, 36 candles of Chanukah, and—according to this teaching—one should light 36 candles for Shabbat to reflect this luminous origin.

The central insight: **The Torah itself is the Or HaGanuz**, the inner Divine illumination hidden from the world yet revealed through sacred experience and deep spiritual toil—like the Sinai revelation, like the candles of Chanukah, and like the deep calm of Shabbat.

Practical Takeaway

The Torah is not merely Divine instruction—it is hidden light. Every time you learn Torah or perform a mitzvah, you access a strand of that original 36-hour brilliance. Whether it's a small candle before Shabbat, or a deep moment of Torah study, **you are participating in the light that once illuminated the world without shadow.**

Consider lighting **36 small candles on Shabbat Chanukah or Shavuot night**, as a personal ritual to align with the Or HaGanuz. Let each light symbolize a step forward through darkness, as Bnei Yisrael did with each utterance at Sinai.

Chassidic Story

Reb Levi Yitzchak of Berdichev once said to his students on Shavuot night:

"You think the Torah was given once, and we merely remember it? No. The Torah is still descending, still echoing. That is why the thunder and lightning at Sinai were not just noise—they were light hidden in sound. Every soul must walk the thirty parsa'ot like at Sinai—through struggle, doubt, fatigue—and then the angels will carry him the rest."

One of the *chassidim*, bewildered, asked:

"But Rebbe, how do I know when I've reached the end of my strength—when the angels are meant to carry me?"

Reb Levi Yitzchak smiled and replied:

"When you stop hearing your own voice and start hearing the Torah speak through you—then you've arrived. That is the Or HaGanuz."

Source: Adapted from oral traditions recorded in *Kedushat Levi al HaMoadim* (Shavuot), and *Sippurei Tzaddikim*, vol. 3. **END NOTE]**

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One time I heard from him that the camp of Israel was three parasangs,	פעם אחת שמעתי ממנו כי מחנה ישראל היתה שלוש פרסאות,
and the walking distance of an average person is ten parasangs per day,	ומהלך אדם בינוני י' פרסאות ביום,
and at each utterance that emerged from the mouth of the Holy One, blessed be He,	ובכל דיבור שיצא מפי הקדוש ברוך הוא,
they recoiled backward the length of their camp (Shir HaShirim Rabbah 8:3),	היו נרתעים לאחוריהם כארץ מחניהם (שיר השירים), (רבה פרק ח', סימן ג')
it turns out that for the Ten Commandments this was three full days,	נמצא לעשרת הדיברות הוא שלשה ימים מכונים,
and on their return it is said (Psalms 68:13),	(ובחזרתם נאמר (תהלים ס"ח, י"ג
"Kings of hosts did skip" (<i>Yedudun</i>), etc.	מלכי צבאות ידודו וגו'
And the giving of the Torah was on Shabbat,	ומתן תורה היתה בשבת
so the tenth utterance occurred at the time of the afternoon Minchah,	נמצא שדיבור העשירי היתה לעת מנחת ערב
and that is [the commandment] "and all that belongs to your fellow" (Exodus 20:14),	(וזהו "וכל אשר לרעך" (שמות כ', י"ד
which corresponds to Raava D'Raavin — the Will of Wills.	שהיא רעותא דרעווין
[NOTE: Summary This teaching explores the mystical timing and structure of Matan Torah. The speaker recounts that the Machaneh Yisrael (Camp of Israel) spanned three <i>parsa'ot</i>, and an average person can walk ten <i>parsa'ot</i> per day. During the Revelation at Sinai, the people were overwhelmed by each of the Ten Commandments and physically recoiled backward the full length of their camp with every Divine utterance (as cited in <i>Shir HaShirim Rabbah</i> 8:3). They then had to return to their place each time. This means the entire sequence of Ten Utterances involved movement equivalent to three full days' worth of walking — aligning with the traditional three days of preparation before Matan Torah. Upon returning each time, the verse "Kings of legions skipped" (Psalms 68:13) refers to how angels or elevated forces carried or danced them back (<i>yedudun</i>). Since the giving of the Torah occurred on Shabbat, and the Ten Utterances took time, the final commandment ("Do not covet...") would have been delivered at Minchah time on Shabbat—a moment known in Kabbalah as Raava D'Raavin, the "Will of Wills," the holiest time of the week.	

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The implication is stunning: the **climax of Divine revelation**, the tenth commandment — a law that deals with inner desire and hidden longing — was given precisely at the moment when **the deepest Divine will** is revealed in time.

Practical Takeaway

Every **Shabbat Minchah** is a reenactment of the final moment of **Matan Torah** — the giving of the deepest commandment, at the holiest hour. It's not just a lull between meals, but a cosmic window into **Raava D'Raavin**, when the hidden will of Hashem meets the inner will of the soul.

To live this:

- Treat **Minchah of Shabbat** with **extra kavannah**, especially in the Amidah and Torah study afterward.
- Reflect during that time on your **inner desires** — what you covet, yearn for, or pursue — and bring them into alignment with the Divine will.
- See **each step in spiritual growth** (even setbacks and returns) as part of that holy rhythm of recoil and return — like at Sinai.

Chassidic Story

The Baal Shem Tov and the Last Light of Shabbat

One Shabbat afternoon, **the Baal Shem Tov** delayed *Minchah* far longer than usual. His students grew restless—sunset was approaching, and they feared missing the proper time. But the Baal Shem Tov sat, eyes closed, completely still.

When he finally stood to pray, he recited each word with slow, trembling devotion. Afterward, he turned to his students and said:

“At the end of Matan Torah, when Hashem spoke the last utterance, the world stood in absolute silence. That was the moment when not the body, but the **deepest longing of the soul**, was commanded: *Do not covet*. This commandment wasn't about action—it was about the **root of will**. That moment was at **Shabbat Minchah**, in the hour of **Raava D'Raavin**, when the soul's will merges with Hashem's will. Each Shabbat, that moment returns.”

He then looked around the room and added:

“You think I delayed Minchah. But I was waiting for that same light to return to the world. The final spark of Sinai. Now it has come, and it will carry us through the week.”

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From that day on, his students would tremble during **Shabbat Minchah**, knowing it held the same holiness as the last echo of **Matan Torah**. **END NOTE]**

Siman #261

He gave a reason why the giving of the Torah was [preceded by] three days.

אמר טעם, למה היה מתן תורה שלשה ימים.

Because when a new light comes into the world,

כי כשבא לעולם אור חדש

it is impossible for it to settle in this world

אי אפשר להתישב בזה העולם

until after three days.

עד אחר שלשה ימים

And this is what is said in the Zohar, Parashat Balak (Zohar III, 265b):

: (וזהו שאמר בזהר בלק (זהר חלק ג', דף רס"ה ע"ב

that Rav Huna rejoiced there for three days —

, דרב הונא חזי תמן תלתא יומין

and understand this well.

. ונהי

[NOTE: Summary

This concise teaching offers a mystical explanation for why **Matan Torah** was preceded by **three days of preparation**. The reason: whenever a **new Divine light** enters the world—particularly a light as immense as that of Torah—it cannot immediately integrate into the physical realm. It takes **three full days** for such a spiritual revelation to **settle** and become **anchored** within the boundaries of this world.

This concept is rooted in the **Zohar** (Balak, III 265b), which recounts how **Rav Huna rejoiced for three days** after encountering a spiritual revelation. His joy wasn't just emotional—it reflected the soul's adjustment to a **higher light**. This same dynamic applied to the entire nation before Matan Torah.

Thus, the **three preparatory days** weren't simply about physical purification or anticipation. They were metaphysical: a required **stabilization period** before the infinite light of Torah could safely dwell in finite vessels.

P – Practical Takeaway

Whenever you experience a **spiritual breakthrough**—a moment of clarity, inspiration, or elevation—don't expect instant integration. Allow time for it to settle.

- **Don't rush revelation:** Give yourself space to absorb and adjust to spiritual light.
- Before major mitzvah moments (e.g., Shavuot, a new Torah resolution, or deep learning), **prepare gradually**—three days is a model for inner alignment.
- After learning something deeply moving, spend a few days living with it quietly—**let it take root** in your behavior and mindset.

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Every **great light needs a vessel**. Give your soul the time to become one.

Would you like a visual concept—like a beam of divine light slowly descending over three days—for this teaching? **END NOTE]**

Siman #262

He expounded at length on the subject of humility, which is essential for receiving the Torah on Shavuot,

הָאָרִיךְ בְּעֵינֵי הַשְּׁפָלוּת שֶׁשִּׁיךְ לְקַבֵּל תּוֹרָה בְּשָׁבוּעוֹת

as is explained in the *Or HaChaim* on the verse (Exodus 3:12),

), (כְּדֹאִיתָא בְּאוֹר הַחַיִּים עַל פְּסוּק (שְׁמוֹת ג', י"ב

"And this shall be the sign for you: that you see yourself as lowly in your own eyes,"

וְזֶה לָךְ הָאוֹת מֵה שֶׁאַתָּה שֶׁפֶל בְּעֵינֶיךָ עֲצָמָה

and you said, "Who am I" — therefore I have sent you.

וְאַמַּרְתָּ מִי אֲנִי, עַל כֵּן שֶׁלַּחְתִּיךָ

The proof: "You will serve on this mountain," which is the smallest and most humble of all mountains.

וְהִרְאִיתָ: שֶׁתַּעֲבֹדוּן עַל הָהָר הַזֶּה שֶׁהוּא קָטָן וְנִמְוָה מִכָּל הָהָרִים

Therefore it is written (Exodus 19:17), "And they stood at the foot of the mountain" —

לְכֹן כְּתוּב (שְׁמוֹת י"ט, י"ז) וַיִּתְּצֻבוּ בְּתַהֲמִית הָהָר

meaning, they considered themselves even lower than the mountain, which is itself low.

שֶׁהֵיוּ אֲעֵלֶם שְׁפָלִים יוֹתֵר מִן הָהָר שֶׁהוּא נִמְוָה, וְכו'

And through this, they were able to receive the Torah.

וְעַל יְדֵי זֶה יָכְלוּ לְקַבֵּל תּוֹרָה

And because of that humility, they attained unity,

וּמִחֻמַּת הַשְּׁפָלוּת בָּאוּ לִיְדֵי אֶחָדוּת

as it is said (Exodus 19:2), "And Israel encamped" — in the singular form.

כְּמוֹ שֶׁכְּתוּב (שָׁם) וַיַּחֲנוּ שָׁם יִשְׂרָאֵל לְשׁוֹן יַחֲיד

And how did they reach unity, against the mountain? Through the trait of humility,

וְעַל יְדֵי מָה הָיוּ בְּאַחֲדוּת נֶגֶד הָהָר? עַל יְדֵי מִדַּת הַשְּׁפָלוּת

which is alluded to in Mount Sinai.

שֶׁמְרומָזְזוֹת בְּהַר סִינַי

As Rabbi Shmuel Yarevich of Warshivke, of blessed memory, used to say:

וְכֵמוֹ שֶׁאַמַּר רַבִּי שְׁמַעְרֵל [וְאֶחָד שִׁינְוִיקֶער] ז"ל

When people consider themselves as nothing, I am nothing, and you are nothing —

שֶׁעַל יְדֵי שֶׁבִּנְי אָדָם מַחְזִיקִים אֶת עֲצָמָם לְ"אִין", אֲנִי "אִין" וְאַתָּה "אִין"

through that comes peace.

עַל יְדֵי זֶה בָּא הַשְּׁלֹום

But when one is higher than the other — it leads to separation.

מִשְׁאִין כֵּן כְּשֶׁאַחַד גָּבוֹה מִחֵבֵרוֹ

(As explained elsewhere, in *P'er Tif'eres HaMiddot*, that this is like a barrel vessel — the higher it is, the less it can contain).

וְכֵמוֹ שֶׁמְבֹאֵר בְּמָקוֹם אֲחֵר (פֶּאָר תִּפְאֶרֶת הַמִּדּוֹת), (מִלְמַד לוֹ) מְשַׁל עַל זֶה מְכַלִּי שֶׁל חֲבִית

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Therefore, on Shavuot one must be of a humble spirit, and through this one can receive the Torah.	וְלָכֵן בְּשִׁבּוּעוֹת צָרִיךְ לִהְיוֹת נִשְׁפָּל רוּחַ, וְעַל יְדֵי זֶה יָכוֹל לְקַבֵּל הַתּוֹרָה
As it is said in the piyut " <i>Chalof Mesukal</i> " by Yosef of Sikliss:	(כְּמוֹ נִשְׁכָּתוּב בְּפִיוּט ("חֲלוֹף מְסֻכָּל" לְסִיקְלִיס יוֹסֵף כ')
"They are compared to three sweet liquids: wine, milk, and honey —"	— מְשָׁלִים לְשִׁלְשָׁה מִשְׁקִים נְחֻמִּים: יַיִן, חֶלֶב וּדְבַשׁ
and in the lowest of vessels they are preserved,	וּבַפָּחוֹת שְׁפִיפִים נִשְׁמְרִים
flowing downward from above to below.	זֹוֹחִים מִגְבוּהַ וְלִנְמוּךְ יוֹרְדִים
On Shavuot the receiving of the Torah is in general,	וּבְשִׁבּוּעוֹת הוּא קַבְּלַת הַתּוֹרָה בְּכָלְלוֹת
and on the other days as well there is receiving of Torah, only in particular.	וּבִשְׁאָר הַיָּמִים גַּם כֵּן קַבְּלַת הַתּוֹרָה, רַק הוּא בְּפֶרֶט
As it is said in the <i>Midrash</i> (Kohelet Rabbah 49:3):	: (כְּדֵאִיתָא בְּמִדְרַשׁ (קֹהֶלֶת רַבָּה מ"ט, ג'
"There is no day that the Holy One, blessed be He, does not bring forth new insights in Torah."	אֵין לָהּ יוֹם שֶׁאֵין הַקְדוּשׁ בְּרוּךְ הוּא מַחְדִּישׁ בּוֹ חֲדוּשֵׁי תּוֹרָה.
And whenever a person considers himself as nothing — they give him the Torah.	וּבְכָל עֵת שֶׁאָדָם אֶצֶל עַצְמוֹ "אֵין" — נוֹתְנִים לוֹ הַתּוֹרָה.
He said in the name of the Rav, z"l, a parable: A valley between mountains —	— וְאָמַר בְּשֵׁם הָרַב ז"ל מָשַׁל לְבִקְעָה שְׁפִין הָהָרִים
all the rain from the mountains flows into it.	שֶׁכָּל הַגִּשְׁמִים מִהָהָרִים יוֹרְדִים שָׁם
So too, when a person is low in his own eyes,	— כֵּךְ אָדָם שֶׁשֹּׁפֵל אֶצֶל עַצְמוֹ
all goodness and blessing flows to him.	יִגִּיעוּ אֵלָיו כָּל הַטּוֹבוֹת וְהַבְּרוּכוֹת
But if he is high — he blocks the flow.	מִשְׁאִין כֵּן כִּשְׁהוּא גְבוּהַ
Therefore, a person should say: Why worry about all my deficiencies?	לָכֵן יִחַשֵׁב אָדָם עַצְמוֹ: לָמָּה לִּי לְדַאֵג עַל כָּל הַחֲסֵרוֹנוֹתִי
Better that I be lowly and a nothing, and Hashem will be with me.	מוֹטֵב שֶׁאֶהְיֶה שֹׁפֵל וְ"אֵין", וִיהִי הַקְדוּשׁ בְּרוּךְ הוּא אִתִּי
As it is written (Isaiah 57:15), "I dwell with the crushed and humble."	(כִּי אֲשַׁכֵּן אֶת דָּבָא (עֵין יִשְׁעֵהוּ נ"ז, ט"ו
And when Hashem is here — there is nothing lacking.	וּכְשֶׁהַקְדוּשׁ בְּרוּךְ הוּא פָּאן — אֵין מַחְסוֹר
When a person is by himself as "nothing," he is not afraid of the evil inclination.	, כִּשְׁאָדָם אֶצֶל עַצְמוֹ "אֵין", אֵינוֹ יִרָא מִיַּצֵּר הָרָע
As brought from the Arizal (<i>Me'orei Or</i> section 47, s.v. ענוה),	(כְּדֵאִיתָא בְּהַאֲרִיז"ל (מוֹאֲרֵי אוֹר כ"ר מ"ז, ל"ס"ס קס"ו
that the gematria of "Anavah" (humility) equals "Samael" — the evil angel —	, "ד' ענוה" גִּמְטְרִיָּא "סַמְאֵל
to hint that humility neutralizes the force of evil.	...לְרַמּוֹז שְׁנָה, גַּם

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Also, Psalm 131, which is numerically equivalent to “Samael”, begins:	”גם הקפיטל קלא [בתהלים], שהוא גימטריא "סמאל",
“My heart was not proud...” — meaning, one who is humble has nothing to fear from the Yetzer Hara.	לא גבה לבי וגו' — משאין פן אדם שאינו שפל, יש לו לירא מיצר הרע
And he said in the name of the Rav, z"l: how brazen is the Yetzer Hara —	ואמר בשם הרב ז"ל: כמה יצר הרע עז פנים
that he can attempt to entice a righteous elder who served the Creator for many years,	שיכול לפתות צדיק זקן שעבד את הבורא כמה שנים
to commit a sin like one of the empty people — even though he certainly won't listen to him.	לעבר עברה כאחד הריקים, אף שבודאי לא ישמע לו —
That is what he z"l said. But we are truly afraid not to stumble with him, God forbid.	כך אמר הוא ז"ל. משאין פן אנהנו יראים ממנו שלא נפשל בו חס ושלום
He also mentioned what Rabbi Gedaliah z"l of Linetz said in the name of his teacher, the Mochiach of Polna'a z"l:	גם הזכיר מה שאמר רבי גדליה ז"ל מליניץ בשם רבו — המוכיח מפולנא ז"ל
that those who walk the path of arrogance include: the Generation of the Flood,	שכדור הגבהות הלכו דור המבול
the Generation of the Tower, and that man [a euphemism for Yeshu] and the wicked chazzan,	ודור הפלגה, ואותו האיש והש"ץ ימה שמו
who were zealous and sought to serve Hashem through arrogance — and they were all uprooted from the world.	שקנאו ובקשו לעבד את השם תבדור בגבהות, וכולם נעקרו מן העולם
Even though at first, they did not begin with wickedness — they thought they were serving Hashem that way.	אף שבתחילה לא התחילו ברשעות, סברו שיעבדו השם תבדור כך

[NOTE: Summary

This deep and richly layered discourse explores the indispensable role of **שפלות** (humility) in the **receiving of the Torah**—both during **Shavuot** and on an ongoing basis. Drawing from the **Or HaChaim** on *Shemot* 3:12, the author notes that Moshe's own self-nullification—his statement "*Mi anochi?*"—was itself the **sign** of his worthiness to be sent to redeem Israel. Similarly, the **giving of the Torah on Mount Sinai** was deliberately chosen to occur on the **smallest and humblest of mountains**, and the verse "*They stood at the foot of the mountain*" is interpreted to mean the people saw themselves as even **lower than the mountain** itself.

This humility is what enabled them to receive the Torah. Furthermore, it was the foundation for their **unity**, as shown in "*Vayichan sham Yisrael*"—a singular form verb implying **oneness**. The reason they were unified, the discourse explains, is because **humble people do not compete**. As Rabbi Shemuel Yarivitch said: "*I am nothing, and you are nothing—so there is peace between us.*" Through evocative metaphors—like wine, milk, and honey flowing only into lowly vessels, or valleys receiving all the rain from surrounding mountains—the discourse underscores that humility is the vessel for all blessing, Torah, and Divine presence.

Even more powerfully, it warns that **arrogance**, even in the guise of spiritual zeal, leads to destruction. Citing

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the downfall of the **Dor HaMabul**, **Dor HaPalagah**, and even figures like "that man" and the "wicked chazzan," the discourse shows that even misguided elevation in Divine service can uproot a person if it is rooted in **gaavah (pride)**.

P – Practical Takeaway

To truly receive Torah—on **Shavuot** or on any day—a person must be **a valley, not a mountain**. That means:

- Before studying or praying, **empty yourself of ego**. Enter the moment with *bitul*.
- When faced with criticism or difficulty, ask: *Am I being too full of myself to receive?*
- Practice humility not as weakness but as a **spiritual vessel** that draws down **Torah, blessing, and peace**.
- During **Shavuot**, make an inner commitment: *"I will not ascend the mountain; I will be the ground beneath it."*

Even if you feel lacking—*asher lecha chesronot*—the text says: **don't worry about your deficiencies**. Better to be “nothing” with Hashem **with you**, than to be “something” without Him. As the verse says: *"I dwell with the crushed and the humble"* (Yeshayahu 57:15).

Chassidic Story

The Humble Cup and the Flood of Torah

The holy **Reb Zusha of Anipoli** once stood near the entrance to the Beit Midrash during the days preceding Shavuot. He would not enter. His students asked him, *"Rebbe, why do you stand outside? Surely your Torah deserves to be heard!"*

Reb Zusha replied:

"If I enter with the thought that I deserve to teach Torah, the Torah will flee from me. But if I remember I am but a broken cup—then perhaps, just perhaps, Hashem will fill me with a drop of His truth."

On Erev Shavuot that year, as Reb Zusha stood by the door again, an elder chassid whispered: *"Rebbe, why not even come to receive the Torah?"*

Zusha answered, *"He gives the Torah in the valley. I will stand here, and let it roll down to me."*

That night, Zusha began to speak—and the room was filled with such holiness that even the greatest scholars said, *"This is not from him. It is the Torah of Sinai."* **END NOTE]**

Siman #263

The essence is submission and humility, to be as “nothing” in one’s own eyes.

עקר הוא הכנעה ושפלות להיות "אין" בעיניו

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And this itself is the receiving of the Torah.	וידבר זה גופא היא קבלת התורה
Even one single hour in which a person sees himself as “nothing” is very good,	ואפילו שעה אחת שנעשה בעיני עצמו “אין” — הוא טוב מאד
and his sins are atoned thereby, etc.	ומתפדין עונותיו וכו'
There are some people who are able, through joy, to rejoice and dance until they become as “nothing”,	ויש קצת [בני אדם] שיוכלו על ידי שמחה לשמח, “ולרקד עד שנעשה כ”אין”
but most people must engage in a little sadness to break the heart,	אבל רב [בני אדם] צריכין לעשות קצת עצבות לשבר את הלב
to recall one’s lowliness, to make the heart broken and crushed —	לזכר שפלותו להיות הלב נשבר ונדכה
then he can become “nothing”.	”אז יוכל להיות “אין”
However, not complete sadness,	אבל לא עצבות גמורה
because through [complete] sadness one cannot come close to Hashem.	כי בעצבות אי אפשר לבוא אל השם יתברך
Rather, as it is written (<i>Mochach Halakhanot</i> , Sha’ar HaPelishut, Chapter 4):	רק כמו שכתוב (מוכח הלכות, שער הפלישות, פרק ד):
“The pious one — joy is on his face, and mourning is in his heart.”	”החסיד — צהלתו בפניו ואבלו בלבו
And one must remember two slips of paper:	וצריך לזכר שני צעטליך
One — of his lowliness and his many sins,	אחד — משפלותו ורוב עונותיו
and the second — of the greatness of Israel:	ושניה — ממצלת ישראל
that when he so desires, he can ascend higher than the angels.	שכשרוצה — יכול לעלות למעלה מהמלאכים

[NOTE: Summary

This concise yet profound teaching emphasizes that the **essence of receiving the Torah** is to become “אין” — **nothingness** in one’s own eyes. Even a single hour of true humility, in which a person sincerely nullifies their ego, is immensely valuable—it brings spiritual elevation and even **atonement for sins**.

Some people can reach this state of *bitul* through **joy and dancing**, dissolving their selfhood in holy celebration. But most people require a touch of **broken-heartedness**—not full-blown sadness, but a gentle, inward humbling—to break the ego and recognize their smallness. This is the kind of emotional posture that opens a person to receive Divine light.

To avoid the dangers of depressive sadness, the teaching cites the classic principle: “*The pious man has joy on his face and mourning in his heart.*” In other words, inward humility paired with outward lightness.

The discourse ends with a practical spiritual technique: always carry two **צעטלעך (notes)**—one listing **your faults and lowliness**, and the other reminding you of the **exalted potential of the Jewish soul**, which can rise **higher than the angels** when it so chooses. True spiritual balance lives in the tension between these two truths.

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Practical Takeaway

- Before learning Torah, praying, or making decisions—pause and say: *“I am nothing, and therefore ready to receive.”*
- If joy brings you humility, rejoice! If not, allow yourself moments of introspective broken-heartedness—not despair, but awakening.
- Write out your own two **צעטלעך**:
 1. What keeps you humble (your struggles, faults, limitations).
 2. What reminds you of your Divine potential (your soul’s strength, Torah you’ve learned, kindness you’ve done).
- Read them regularly—especially around **Shavuot**—to balance **humility with holy aspiration**. **END NOTE]**

Siman #264

He, of blessed memory, said that it is written in the Shulchan Aruch (Orach Chaim §494), and in the Magen Avraham (s.k. 10),	אמר הוא ז"ל, דאיתא בשלחן ערוך (או"ח סימן (תצ"ד), במגן אברהם (ס"ק י
that the custom is to set up trees in the synagogue and in homes,	שנוהגין להעמיד אילנות בבית הכנסת ובבתים
to remember that judgment is passed on the fruits of the tree, and to pray for them.	לזכור שדונגין על פירות האילן, ויתפללו עליהם
And according to Kabbalah, this refers to the fruits of the Supernal Tree,	ועל פי מבלה, רצון לומר: פירות האילן העליון
as explained in the Kavanot (see <i>Tola'at Yaakov</i> , Sod Chag HaShavuot).	כמו שמבואר בפנונות — עין תולעת יעקב, סוד חג השבועות
And the custom of laypeople to stick tree branches into the wall and corners —	ומה שנוהגין בעלי בתים לתחוב זמורות האילן בפתל ונקירות
this is a mistake on their part.	טעות היא ביניהם
For in the Magen Avraham, it is written: “to set them upright” — specifically.	כי במגן אברהם איתא: “להעמיד” דוקא
And the reason is — to elevate them into the World of Atzilut, etc.	והטעם: להביאן לעולם האצילות, וכו'
And he said in the name of the Rav, z"l:	ואמר בשם הרב ז"ל
In Shulchan Aruch, one must learn with soul.	בשלחן ערוך צריך לעיין עם נשמה

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[NOTE: Summary

This short but meaningful teaching explains the deeper significance of the custom to place **trees in the synagogue and in homes** on **Shavuot**. According to the *Shulchan Aruch* (Orach Chaim §494) and the *Magen Avraham*, this is done to remind us that on Shavuot, **judgment is passed on the fruits of the tree** (Mishnah, Rosh Hashanah 1:2), and to inspire people to **pray for a good outcome**.

But the speaker adds that, **according to Kabbalah**, the real intent is not merely agricultural — it refers to the **"fruits of the Supernal Tree"** (*Ilan Elyon*) in the World of Atzilut, meaning **spiritual outgrowths** of Divine emanation.

He criticizes a common folk custom: people who **stick tree branches haphazardly into walls** or corners. This, he says, is a **mistaken practice**, because the *Magen Avraham* emphasizes the word "להעמיד" — to **stand the trees upright** — hinting to a mystical elevation of the physical tree into the **spiritual Tree above**. The act must be intentional and structured, not decorative.

He concludes with a remark from his teacher: one must learn **Shulchan Aruch with a soul** — meaning, don't just follow external halachah mechanically, but seek its **inner purpose and Divine resonance**.

Practical Takeaway

- When placing greenery or trees for **Shavuot**, don't just do it for beauty — **stand them upright** with intention.
- Reflect that you are invoking not only earthly fruit but **Heavenly fruits** — spiritual accomplishments, mitzvot, prayers, and Torah.
- Learn halachah not just with intellect but **with soul**. Every custom is a portal to higher realms, if you approach it with kavannah (intention).
- Before Yom Tov, ask yourself: *What spiritual "fruits" do I want to grow this year?* **END NOTE]**

Siman #265

In the piyut for the second day of Shavuot ("Haleluyos" by Yosef of Sikliss),

(בפיוט יום ב' של שבועות ("הללויות" לסיקליס),

We also recite the stanza beginning with "With a rain of generosity...", etc.

אומרים גם חרוז "בגשם נדבות" וגו'.

Although some in the public say that this line came from the wicked Shatz, as mentioned earlier —

— אף שאומרים העולם גם כן שבא מפת ש"ץ כפ"ל

this is an invention of the wicked, who found for themselves a place [to insert this idea], etc.

זה בדאו הרשעים ומצאו להם מקום וגו'.

But the words themselves are from the original piyut composed by Yosef of Sikliss.

אבל הדיבורים הם מפיוט עצמו לסיקליס.

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Only the interpretation that was printed in some machzorim about that stanza —	— רק הפרוש שהיה כתוב במחזורים על הנ"ל
the Rebbe of Shpitivka (Reb Yehudah Leib of Spitovka) instructed to have it erased.	צוה הרב דשפיטיווקא קנ"ג למחקו.
Also, the stanzas numbered 154 [in some editions], which speak about the flaws of the Patriarchs and such —	גם מדלגים הקרוזים קנ"ד שמדברים בהסרונות האבות — וכיוצא קנ"ה
are skipped over. And in some machzorim it is written that in older editions, those stanzas were not included.	ובמחזורים נרשם שבישנים אינו נכתב שם.

[NOTE: Summary

This passage deals with **liturgical accuracy and the integrity of piyyutim** recited on the **second day of Shavuot**, specifically the “**Haleluyos**” composed by **R' Yosef of Sikliss**. It clarifies that a particular stanza—“**בגשם נדבות**” (“**With a rain of generosity**”)—has been subject to **false attribution**. Some people claim it was inserted by a controversial or heretical **shatz** (cantor), but this is dismissed as a fabrication by the wicked, who “*found themselves a place*” to distort tradition.

In truth, the stanza is authentically part of the original piyut. However, **some later machzorim** included **interpretive glosses or commentary** that introduced problematic associations. Recognizing this, the **Rebbe of Shpitivka** (identified as Reb Yehudah Leib of Spitovka, d. 1893) instructed that these **interpretations be erased** to preserve the sanctity and correctness of the original composition.

Additionally, certain stanzas—such as **#154 and 155**, which reference **shortcomings of the Patriarchs**—are **skipped** in some communities and omitted entirely from earlier machzorim, indicating that these lines may have been later insertions or misattributions.

The broader point is the **care with which piyyut should be preserved**, ensuring fidelity to the **intent of the original composer**, and avoiding theological or liturgical distortions.

Practical Takeaway

- **Be cautious** about interpretations printed in **machzorim or commentaries**—not everything marginal is authoritative.
- Maintain **accuracy and kavod (respect)** for liturgy: consult reliable sources, and preserve the **intent of authentic paytanim**.
- If you're leading or teaching davening, **research the background** of piyyutim before assigning blame or skipping sections.
- Respect the rulings of **great Rabbanim and editors**—like the Rebbe of Shpitivka—who took responsibility to preserve Torah-true tradition. **END NOTE]**

Siman #266

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In the name of the Rav, z"l, a reason was given for the eating of dairy foods on Shavuot:	בשם הרב ז"ל, טעם לאכילת מאכלי חלב בשבועות.
For before the giving of the Torah, meat from a non-slaughtered animal (<i>nechirah</i>) was permitted.	כי קדם מתן תורה היתה מותר בשר נחירה
But at the moment of the giving of the Torah, it became forbidden, and they needed to perform shechitah.	ובשעת מתן תורה נאסר והצרכו לשחוט
And all agree that the Torah was given on Shabbat (Shabbat 86b),	(ולכלי עלמא בשבת ניתנה תורה (שבת פ"ו ע"ב
and on that Shabbat they had no properly slaughtered meat, and could not slaughter,	ובאותה שבת לא היתה להם בשר שחוט ולא יכלו לשחוט
and they were forced to eat dairy foods,	והצרכו לאכול מאכלי חלב
and in memory of this, we too eat dairy foods.	ולזכר זה אנו אוכלין גם כן מאכלי חלב
And I asked: But shechitah was given later, during the forty days when Moshe was on the mountain,	ושאלתי: דשחיטה ניתנה אחר כך, בארבעים יום שהיה משה בקר
as stated in the Turei Zahav, <i>Yoreh De'ah</i> , beginning of Siman 1.	כדאיתא בטורי וזהב [יורה דעה] ריש סימן א'
And R' Moshe David Yisrael, may he live, son of R' Binyamin Ze'ev z"l, answered me:	והשיב מו"ה דוד ישראל נ"י בנו [של רבי בנימין זאב ז"ל]
that in the Ten Commandments are hinted all the mitzvot.	שבעשרת הדברות מרומז כל המצוות

[NOTE: Summary

This discourse presents a well-known reason for the custom of **eating dairy on Shavuot**. It explains that prior to Matan Torah, **non-slaughtered meat** (**נחירה**) was permitted. But when the Torah was given—**according to all opinions on Shabbat**—the laws of **shechitah** (**ritual slaughter**) became binding. Since slaughter was **forbidden on Shabbat**, and they had no pre-slaughtered kosher meat prepared, Bnei Yisrael were compelled to eat **dairy foods** that day.

To **commemorate this historic moment**, we too eat dairy on Shavuot.

A question is raised: How could the laws of shechitah apply immediately, if according to the **Turei Zahav** (*YD* §1), shechitah was only formally given **forty days later** during Moshe's stay on Mount Sinai?

The response, offered by **R' David Yisrael**, son of **R' Binyamin Ze'ev**, is that **all 613 mitzvot are alluded to in the Ten Commandments**—even if they were only explicated later. Thus, the sanctity of the Torah already carried with it the **obligation to observe all future halachot**, including shechitah.

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Practical Takeaway

The custom of eating dairy is not merely symbolic—it reflects **how Torah immediately changed Jewish life**. With the giving of the Torah, even the **kitchen was transformed**. From one day to the next, simple food became a matter of **Divine will**.

- When eating dairy on Shavuot, pause and reflect: *“Am I living with Torah awareness in my eating, my habits, my home?”*
- Remember that Torah isn’t only lofty—it touches every action, even **what’s on your plate**.
- Embrace the idea that **Matan Torah still happens** every time you adjust your life to reflect a mitzvah you didn’t keep before.

Shavuot is the celebration of that shift—from natural life to **Torah life**.

Chassidic Story

The Alter Rebbe and the Holy Cheesecake

One Shavuot, the **Alter Rebbe** (R’ Shneur Zalman of Liadi) requested a small piece of **cheesecake** before beginning the meal. The *gabbai* was surprised—it wasn’t the Rebbe’s custom to snack before Kiddush.

The Alter Rebbe said:

“Today is not just a remembrance. It is the day the Torah came into the world—and when it did, it changed even the way we eat. A Yid must taste that change. The cheesecake isn’t just food—it is the imprint of Torah law on the table of Israel.”

Later, he taught his chassidim:

“When Hashem gave the Torah, He didn’t just sanctify Heaven—He sanctified the oven, the cow, and the cooking pot.” **Source:** Sichot Harav HaTzaddik, HaRav Aharon of Strashele on Shavuot, based on oral traditions about the Alter Rebbe recorded in Sippurei Chassidim, vol. Shavuot. **END NOTE]**

Siman #267

On Shavuot, we eat dairy foods,

as a hint to the verse: *“Honey and milk are under your tongue”* (Shir HaShirim 4:11),

referring to the Torah, which is compared to these.

בשבעות אוכלין מאכלי חלב,

לרמז "דבש וחלב תחת לשונך" (שיר השירים ד', י"א),

.על התורה שנמשלה לזה.

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[NOTE: Summary

This teaching explains that the custom to eat **dairy foods on Shavuot** is based on the verse "*Honey and milk are under your tongue*" (*Shir HaShirim* 4:11). The **Torah** is compared to both **milk and honey**—sweet, nourishing, and spoken from the mouth of the Jewish people. Shavuot, being the day of **Matan Torah**, is the ideal time to reflect this comparison in practice by partaking of dairy foods.

Practical Takeaway

- When eating **cheesecake or dairy dishes on Shavuot**, don't do it mindlessly—recall that the Torah is **sweet and sustaining**, like milk and honey.
- Strive to speak Torah words so that they too are "**under your tongue**"—natural, sweet, and nourishing to others.
- Use Shavuot to **renew your love of Torah**—not just its commandments, but its **beauty and taste**.

Let your Torah be like milk and honey: **nurturing and delightful**.

Would you like a visual of a glowing scroll with drops of milk and golden honey flowing across the letters?

END NOTE]

Siman #268

Another reason: because of the verse "*Honey and milk are under your tongue*" (*Shir HaShirim* 4:11),

עוד טעם, משום "דבש וְחֶלֶב תַּחַת לְשׁוֹנְךָ" (שִׁיר
(הַשִּׁירִים ד', י"א

and as it is stated in the Gemara (see *Keritut* 5b),

, (וְכִדְאִיתָא בְּגִמְרָא (עֵין קְרִיתוֹת ו', ט"ו

that honey and all kinds of sweetness accustom the tongue to Torah.

.דבש וְכָל מִינֵי מְתִיקָה מְרַגְלִין הַלְשׁוֹן לַתּוֹרָה

[NOTE: Summary

This teaching presents an additional reason for the custom of eating **sweet dairy foods on Shavuot**. Drawing from *Shir HaShirim* 4:11 ("*Honey and milk under your tongue*"), the comparison of Torah to sweetness is not merely poetic. The **Gemara (Keritut 5b)** explains that **sweet foods like honey** help to **accustom the tongue to Torah** — they make it easier, more pleasant, more "natural" to speak words of Torah.

Thus, on the day when the Torah was given, we **eat foods that prepare our mouths to speak it**—both in physical sensation and in spiritual metaphor.

Reb Pinchas of Koretz

Imrie Pinchas

Shavous

P – Practical Takeaway

- When enjoying **sweet foods on Shavuot**, let them remind you: Torah should be **sweet on your tongue** and **flow with ease and love**.
- Give children **honey or candy** when learning Torah, just as tradition teaches, to **build a positive association** with learning.
- If Torah feels bitter or hard to say—add sweetness: **sing a niggun**, learn with a friend, or taste something sweet before starting.
- Prepare your **mouth and your heart** to be vessels for Divine words.

Let your Torah be not only correct, but delicious. END NOTE]

Siman #269

Another reason: for it is stated, “ <i>And Shlomo made a feast for all his servants</i> ” (see **Melachim I 3:15) —	עוד טעם, דאיתא "וַיַּעַשׂ שְׁלֹמֹה מִשְׁתֶּה לְכָל עַבְדָּיו", (עין מלכים א' ג', ט"ו)
from here we learn that one makes a feast upon the completion of a mitzvah.	מכאן שעושין סעודה לגמרא של מצוה.
And on Shavuot, we complete the mitzvah of counting the Omer,	ובשבועות גומרין מצות ספירת העמר,
and therefore we make a feast.	ולכך עושין סעודה
But if one were to make a meat meal, there would be no indication whether it is for this reason or just for Yom Tov.	ואם היו עושין סעודת בשר, אין הכר אם לישם זה, אם לישם יום טוב
Therefore, we make it from dairy.	לכך עושין מהלב

[NOTE: Summary

This teaching offers a halachic-ceremonial reason for the custom of **eating dairy on Shavuot**. Based on the verse “*And Shlomo made a feast for all his servants*” (*Melachim I 3:15*), the Sages derive that it is proper to **make a celebratory meal upon the completion of a mitzvah** (*se’udat mitzvah*).

On **Shavuot**, we complete the **mitzvah of Sefirat HaOmer**—49 days of spiritual counting from Pesach to Matan Torah. Thus, a **se’udah** is held in honor of this conclusion.

But if the festive meal were meat-based, it would be **indistinguishable** from a regular Yom Tov meal. To make the purpose clear—that it's **not just for Yom Tov**, but to **celebrate a mitzvah's completion**—the custom became to serve **dairy foods**, providing a visible and thematic distinction.

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Practical Takeaway

- When eating **dairy on Shavuot**, realize it is not only a mystical or poetic symbol—it is a halachically meaningful act of marking a **spiritual accomplishment**.
- Use Shavuot to reflect: **Have I counted the days toward Torah with mindfulness?**
- Celebrate every mitzvah you complete with **intentional joy**—whether learning a masechta, finishing a sefer, or concluding the Omer count.
- A **simple cheesecake** can become a vessel for gratitude, for saying: *"I've finished something sacred."*

Turn your dairy meal into a **siyum feast for the soul**. END NOTE]

Siman #270

Another reason: because in the nature of things, smallness always precedes greatness,	עוד טעם אחר, כי לעולם קטנות קודם לגדולה
and this is the path in the study of wisdom:	וזה הדרך בלימוד החכמה
for one learns first letters, then word combinations, then interpretation,	כי מלמדין אותיות, ואחר כך צירוף התבות, ואחר כך הפרוש
then Gemara, and then Kabbalah—	ואחר כך גמרא, ואחר כך קבלה
following the order of the worlds of Atzilut–Beriah–Yetzirah–Asiyah, from below to above (see page 158).	(בדרך העולמות אב"ע מלמטה למעלה) (קני"ח)
And on every Yom Tov (see page 159), there is a stage of katnut (smallness) before gadlut (greatness),	ובכל יום טוב (קני"ט) יש בחינת קטנות קודם לגדולה
for on Erev Pesach, the firstborns fast, and the fast is a form of smallness (katnut),	כי בערב פסח מתעניין הבכורות, ובחינת תענית — היא קטנות
as is explained in the writings (on <i>She'elat Luzk</i> , page 7b).	(וענין בכתבים (שעל לוז"ק דף ז' ע"ב
And before Sukkot is Yom Kippur, and before Purim is the fast of Esther,	וקודם סוכות — הוא יום הכפורים, וקודם פורים — תענית אסתר
but on Shavuot, there is no stage of katnut beforehand.	אבל בחג השבועות — אין שום קטנות קודם
Therefore, we eat dairy foods, etc., which are in the secret of katnut (spiritual smallness), etc.,	לכך אוכלין מאכלי חלב וגו', שהוא בסוד קטנות וגו'
and afterward we eat meat.	ואחר כך אוכלין בשר

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[NOTE: Summary

This deep mystical teaching gives yet another reason for the custom of eating **dairy followed by meat** on **Shavuot**. The principle: in all spiritual growth, **katnut (smallness)** must precede **gadlut (greatness)**. This is reflected in both human development (letters → words → interpretation → Gemara → Kabbalah) and in the structure of the **spiritual worlds** (Asiyah → Yetzirah → Beriah → Atzilut).

Likewise, on every **Yom Tov**, we pass through a stage of smallness before elevation:

- **Erev Pesach**: Fast of the firstborns (katnut)
- **Before Sukkot**: Yom Kippur
- **Before Purim**: Fast of Esther

But **Shavuot** has **no preparatory fast** or stage of katnut—so we **simulate one** by beginning the Yom Tov with **dairy foods**, which represent **gentleness and minimalism**, and only **afterward eating meat**, symbolizing **spiritual expansion**.

Practical Takeaway

- Shavuot's meal order is not just a custom—it reflects a **cosmic truth**: you can only reach greatness by passing through humility and simplicity.
- Begin your spiritual growth gently. First the milk of Torah—simple, digestible ideas—then deepen toward heavier “meat.”
- Approach Torah with the mindset: *“I am starting in katnut, but I am heading toward gadlut.”*
- By eating **dairy before meat** on Shavuot, you are reenacting your own **climb from Asiyah to Atzilut**, from human to holy.

Chassidic Story

Reb Aharon of Karlin and the Two-Part Meal

On Shavuot, **Reb Aharon of Karlin** would always begin his Yom Tov meal with a **small bowl of dairy porridge**—simple, quiet, humble. Only afterward would he wash again and begin the full meal with meat, wine, and great singing.

A student once asked, “Why begin with peasant food, Rebbe?”

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He replied:

“Before the Torah was given, we were infants. Torah is the milk that trained our mouths. Even now, I must remember: before greatness, there must be smallness. That is how the gates of Atzilut open.”

And when they sang “Ata Nigleisa,” he would close his eyes and whisper:

“From katnut... to gadlut... to the fire at Sinai.”

Source: Oral tradition from the Karliner court, referenced in *Toldot Aharon* and *Sichot Kodesh* of Reb Aharon II of Karlin. **END NOTE]**

Siman #271

The Torah loves only humility,	הַתּוֹרָה אֵין אוֹהֶבֶת אֶלָּא שְׂפָלוּת
therefore in earlier generations they would learn on the ground.	לִכְךָ בַּיָּמִים קְדָמוֹנִים הָיוּ לומְדִים עַל הָאָרֶץ
And for this reason we eat dairy foods on Shavuot,	וְלִכְךָ אוֹכְלִים מֵאֲכָלֵי חֵלֶב בְּשָׁבוּעוֹת
for it represents katnut (spiritual smallness).	וְשֶׁהוּא קִטְנוּת

[NOTE: Summary

This teaching conveys a simple but profound truth: **the Torah only “loves” humility**. Those who are arrogant cannot truly receive it. This is why in early generations, people would **learn Torah while sitting on the floor**—to literally and spiritually lower themselves, recognizing their smallness before Divine wisdom.

To reflect this core value on **Shavuot**, the day we receive the Torah anew, we eat **dairy foods**, which symbolize **katnut**—a state of **gentleness, softness, and spiritual humility**. Milk is modest, simple, and nourishing—just like the soul that’s ready to receive Torah.

Practical Takeaway

- **Lower yourself before learning Torah**—not in self-hate, but in self-nullification. Recognize the Torah is higher than you, and that’s why it can lift you.
- When eating **dairy on Shavuot**, pause and ask: *“Am I approaching Torah with humility or ego?”*
- Create a moment of **physical or symbolic humility** before learning: sit lower, remove distractions, or seated on a cushion to awaken inner submission.

Shavuot isn’t about how much Torah you know—it’s about how **ready you are to receive it anew**. **END NOTE]**

Siman #272

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The reason we eat dairy foods on Shavuot is because, in the mystical dimension of Torah, there is a concept of “back” (achorayim) and “face” (panim).	מה שאוכלין בשבועות מאכלי חלב, כי בסוד בחינת התורה יש בחינת אחרים ופנים.
That is, when a person encounters a difficult question in Torah,	,דהיינו: בשקשה לאדם איזו קשיא
and then struggles and toils in Torah—	,ואחר כך בשמיגע בתורה
“ער טוט זיך דיא מיא” (Yiddish: he sweats and strains),	,”ער טוט זיך די מיא”
and finally resolves the question—	,מתרץ הקשיא
then it turns out that what at first seemed correct,	,כי מתחלה נראה לו שהכל על נכון
now becomes even more refined and clarified,	,ועתה נתברר לו יותר מברר ויותר טוב
which would not have happened had there been no difficulty.	.מה שאין בן אם לא היתה קשה לו הקשיא
And dairy foods correspond to the aspect of achorayim (backside),	,ומאכלי חלב בא מבחינת אחרים
and afterward we eat meat, which is the panim (face/front).	.ואחר כך אוכלין בשר

[NOTE: Summary

This mystical teaching links the custom of **eating dairy before meat on Shavuot** to the **inner dynamics of Torah learning** itself. According to Kabbalah, Torah contains both “**Achorayim**” (the backside) and “**Panim**” (the face/front)—representing two stages of revelation:

- The **initial confusion or difficulty** in understanding Torah is the **back**—dark, concealed, resistant.
- The **breakthrough of clarity** that comes after toiling in Torah is the **face**—light, beauty, truth revealed.

When a person **wrestles with a kushiya**, to the point of **straining and sweating**, and then suddenly finds the answer—the Torah he receives is **deeper and clearer** than if there had been no question at all.

Milk, which is light, basic, and associated with infancy, represents the **lower state of achorayim**. **Meat**, rich and sustaining, corresponds to the **panim**, the revealed depth of Torah.

Thus, on Shavuot, the day of **receiving Torah**, we **reenact this journey**: from simple milk to elevated meat, from struggle to clarity, from the back to the face.

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Practical Takeaway

- Don't avoid **difficult Torah questions**—embrace them. They are the path to deeper light.
- When Torah feels hard, remember: you are still in **achorayim**. Push through, and **panim** will be revealed.
- Eat your Shavuot dairy with this intention: *"I start here—not in brilliance, but in effort."*
- Celebrate Torah breakthroughs like a meal—**sweetened by the struggle that birthed them.**

Every kushiya is a doorway. Every frustration in learning is a hallway to **Divine clarity. END NOTE]**

Siman #273

King David, peace be upon him, was the embodiment of the Oral Torah (see <i>Zemach David</i>, vol. 2, p. 30),	דוד המלך עליו השלום הנה בחינת תורה שבעל פה (זמ"ח דוד חלק ב', ל'),
and he was born on Shavuot,	ונולד בשבועות
and we read from the Written Torah [on that day],	וקורין תורה שבכתב
and this is immediately a union [of the two aspects].	והוא תיכף יחוד
Malchut within Malchut is exceedingly elevated—	מלכות שבמלכות הוא גבוה מאד
this is the attribute of King David, peace be upon him.	מדתו של דוד המלך עליו השלום
Therefore, on Shabbat at Minchah, we say " <i>Tzidkatcha</i> ",	"לכה בשבת במנחה צדקתך"
and one of the verses corresponds to David.	אחד פנגד דוד
And he was born on Shavuot,	ונולד בשבועות
and we read Torah Shebichtav [on that day],	וקורין תורה שבכתב
and this constitutes an immediate unification.	והוא תיכף יחוד

Siman #274

He said: Why is it that when a person learns on a regular night, he does not toil so much,	אמר: מפני מה כשאדם לומד לילה אחד — אינו עמל כל כך
[alternative version: " <i>It doesn't hurt his mouth then, but on Shavuot, his mouth hurts</i> "],	נ"א: טוט קים איהם דאס מויל ניט ווייא, ובשבועות [טוט איהם דאס מויל ווייא]
it is because when a person learns [normally], he learns with da'at—with understanding of what he learns,	מפני שפשאדם לומד — הוא לומד בדעת, שמבין מה שלומד
and da'at is from a higher world—" <i>iz a hekherer olam</i> "—	"ידעת היא מעולם עליון — איז א העקרער עולם"
and the speech has vitality.	גיש לדיבור חיות
But on Shavuot, he says words without understanding,	אבל בשבועות — אומר ואינו מבין

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and the speech has no vitality at all.	וְאֵין לְדִיבּוּר חַיּוּת כָּלל
And therefore, he has great toil on that night,	וְלָכֵן יֵשׁ לוֹ עֲמָל גָּדוֹל בָּאוֹתוֹ הַלַּיְלָה
[alternate version: “ <i>That’s why his mouth hurts</i> ”],	[נ"א: לָכֵן טוֹט קָסָא אִים דָּאס מוֹיִל וְוִיָּא]
and he said: this is true.	וְאָמַר וְשֶׁהוּא אֱמֶת
[NOTE: Summary This deeply introspective teaching addresses a strange and very human experience: why does learning Torah on Shavuot night feel so toilsome, even physically painful or difficult, more than any other night of learning? The answer: on an ordinary night, a person learns with da’at—they understand what they’re reading, and that understanding brings light, vitality, and spiritual flow to the learning. The speech itself feels alive. But on Shavuot night, the spiritual atmosphere is so elevated—so rooted in a higher world—that often the words are recited without comprehension, and the speech feels heavy, lacking vitality. This creates a unique form of spiritual labor—saying sacred words that you can’t fully grasp, yet doing so with devotion. It may even feel physically taxing, like the mouth "hurts"—not from exertion, but from speaking without connection. Yet this very effort is holy, because it reflects a soul striving upward to a place it doesn’t yet reach.	
Practical Takeaway • If your Shavuot night learning feels difficult, know that you are not failing—you are touching a level that’s higher than understanding. • Torah isn’t always sweet and clear—sometimes it’s sacrifice, and that, too, is beloved to Hashem. • Push through the learning—even when the words feel dry. The light is there, even if hidden. • Don’t give up if your mind is tired. Even uncomprehended Torah has great power—especially on the night of its giving. The toil of the mouth on Shavuot is not a burden—it is a crown of fire. END NOTE]	
Siman #275	
The reason we do not read on Shavuot the Torah portion beginning “<i>An ox or a lamb</i>” (Leviticus 22:27),	מָה שְׂאִין קוֹרִין בְּשָׁבוּעוֹת פְּרִשֶׁת "שׁוֹר אוֹ כֶּשֶׁב" (וַיִּקְרָא כ"ב, כ"ז),
as we do on the other festivals,	כְּמוֹ בְּשָׂאר הַמוֹעֲדִים
is because the second day of Yom Tov in the Diaspora is in the mystical category of “Mishneh Torah” (Repeated Torah),	מִפְּנֵי שֶׁיּוֹם טוֹב ב' שֶׁל גָּלוּיוֹת הוּא בְּסוּד מִשְׁנֵה תּוֹרָה
in which matters are repeated from what was said in the earlier books.	שֶׁנֶּכְפַּל שָׁם מָה שֶׁנֶּאֱמַר בְּסִפְרִים הָרִאשׁוֹנִים

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Therefore, on every second day of Yom Tov, we read the portion “Kol HaBechor”,	וְלִכְדּוֹ קוֹרִין בְּכָל יוֹם טוֹב שְׁנֵי פָרָשֶׁת "כָּל הַבְּכוֹר",
which is in Parshat Re'eh (Deuteronomy 15:19).	(שְׁהִיא בְּפָרָשֶׁת רְאֵה (דְּבָרִים ט"ו, י"ט
And on the first day of Shavuot, we must read the Ten Commandments.	וּבְיוֹם א' שֶׁל שָׁבוּעוֹת צָרִיכִין לְקַרֹּת עֲשֶׂת הַדְּבָרוֹת.
And this is only the case outside the Land of Israel,	וְזֶה דִּקְא בַחוּץ לְאֶרֶץ
but not in Eretz Yisrael,	אֲבָל לֹא בְּאֶרֶץ יִשְׂרָאֵל
because the essence of Mishneh Torah was repeated in the Plains of Moav,	כִּי עָקַר מִשְׁנֵה תוֹרָה נִשְׁנִית בְּעֶרְבוֹת מוֹאָב
and therefore, only one day of Yom Tov is observed there.	וְלִכְדּוֹ שֵׁם הוּא רַק יוֹם אֶחָד יוֹם טוֹב

[NOTE: ♦ Summary

In this teaching, **Reb Pinchas of Koretz** offers a mystical and textual reason why **the Torah reading on the second day of Shavuot in the Diaspora** is different from other festivals.

Normally, the portion “*Shor o Kesev*” (Leviticus 22) is read on Yom Tov, as it discusses sacrifices, but on **Shavuot**, it is **not read on the second day** outside of Israel. Why?

Because the **second day of Yom Tov**, which only exists in **Chutz LaAretz**, corresponds to the concept of “**Mishneh Torah**”—the repeated Torah of **Sefer Devarim**. In this spirit, on the second day of Shavuot we read **Parshat “Kol HaBechor”** (Devarim 15), which is itself a repetition of earlier mitzvot, in keeping with the doubled nature of the day.

The **first day**, however, remains the essential moment of **Matan Torah**, and so the **Aseret HaDibrot (Ten Commandments)** are read, reflecting the full impact of Sinai.

In contrast, in **Eretz Yisrael**, where only one day is observed, the reading follows the core structure—no duplication is needed, because **the land itself is rooted in unity**, just as **Mishneh Torah** was spoken in **Arvot Moav**, just outside the Land.

♦ Practical Takeaway

- If you're in **Chutz LaAretz**, recognize that the **second day of Yom Tov** is not redundant—it carries a unique **echo of Torah**.
- **Shavuot Day 1** is **revelation**—**Torah Shebichtav** at its source.
Shavuot Day 2 is **repetition**—**Torah as remembered**, as processed by human mind and heart.
- Learn **Sefer Devarim** on Shavuot to absorb this dual energy: original light (Day 1) and **internalized light** (Day 2).
- In your own Torah practice, remember: there is always a **first flash** and then a **repetition**—one is **Divine**, the other is **yours**.

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♦ Chassidic Story: Reb Pinchas and the Echo of Torah

It is said that **Reb Pinchas of Koretz** once remained silent through the entire first night of Shavuot. He did not say *Tikkun Leil Shavuot*, nor did he open a sefer. He simply sat, eyes closed, lips sealed.

In the morning, his student asked:

"Rebbe, why did you not say a single word of Torah?"

Reb Pinchas answered:

"Last night, I was at Sinai. I did not speak because I was being spoken to."

Then he added:

"Today, on the second day, is for us to speak back. Torah must echo. That is Mishneh Torah."

And he began learning aloud from **Parshat Re'eh**: *"Kol haBechor..."*

Source: Attributed to *Imrei Pinchas* (compilation from students of Reb Pinchas of Koretz), with allusions found in *Mevasser Tov al HaMo'adim* and *Midrash Pinchas*. **END NOTE]**