



Text Message Q&A #118

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Shavuot

Learning on the Night of Shavuot

Q: Is there an obligation to learn the entire night of Shavuot?

A: No. But it is a proper custom. Someone who is unable should try to learn until midnight (Magen Avraham, Orach Chaim 494).

Q: Which is preferable – learning all night and falling asleep during Shacharit or going to sleep?

A: Going to sleep. Davening Shacharit without falling asleep is a basic halachah, and learning all night is a worthwhile addition.

Q: Which is preferable – learning during the night, or learning during the day, if I will learn more during the day?

A: During the day, since learning more Torah is a basic halachah, and learning Torah all night on Shavuot is a worthwhile addition (This is unlike the ruling of Ha-Rav Chaim Kanvieski that the custom is to learn all night, and it is preferable to learn during the night even if one learns less than he would have during the day. Piskei Shemuot, pp. 81-82. Although Ha-Rav Yitzchak Zev Soloveitchik, the Brisker Rav, was surprised that people are so particular to stay awake the entire night of Shavuot, which is a custom, while on Pesach night, where there is a law to discuss the Exodus from Egypt until one is overcome by sleep, people are not so careful. And in the city of Brisk, people were not careful to follow the custom of staying awake the entire night of Shavuot, since why is this night different from all other night? And also, learning on Shavuot night

is not more important than learning during the day. Uvdot Ve-Hanhagot Le-Beit Brisk vol. 2, p. 79).

Q: I heard that it is forbidden to engage in idle chatter on the night of Shavuot?

A: It is not a prohibition, but it is proper, and one should try as much as possible to refrain (Kaf Ha-Chaim 494:11).

Q: Is one obligated to learn the Tikun Leil Shavuot?

A: No. A person should learn Torah in a subject that his heart desires (Avodah Zarah 19a. And Ha-Rav Chaim Kanievski said that there are different customs, each of which is acceptable. Piskei Shemuot, p. 81).

Q: If one's father says the Tikun, should his son also say the Tikun, or is it permissible to learn Gemara?

A: It is a personal decision (Ha-Rav Yosef Shalom Elyashiv said: "It is better for him to learn Massechet Baba Metzia, Perek Ha-Socher Et Ha-Po'alim [One who hires workers], and even if his father says the Tikun." And Ha-Rav Chaim Kanievski said: "If his father says the Tikun, he should also say the Tikun". Yadoon Moshe vol. 9 #59).

Q: Do women also need to learn all night?

A: They are not obligated, but it is certainly a good thing.

Milchigs

Q: Is there an obligation to eat Milchigs on Shavuot?

A: It is the Custom. Yemenite Jews do not do so (Shulchan Aruch Ha-Mekutzar, p. 72).

Q: Does one have to eat an entire Milchig meal?

A: It is enough to have one dairy food. And it is then possible to wash out one's mouth, wash one's hands and clean the table, and have a Fleischig meal (Or Le-Tzion 3:196. And the Steipler Gaon would only have a Milchig meal at night. Orchot Rabbenu vol. 1, p. 98).

Early Davening on Shavuot

Q: Can one daven Maariv early on Shavuot, or is it a problem because one needs 7 complete weeks of Sefirat Ha-Omer?

A: Ashkenazim – No, Sefardim are lenient (Mishneh Berurah 414:1. Shut Yechaveh Daat 6:30).