

שבועות  
Shavuot



Because learning Torah is sweet

ו' – ז' סיון תשפ"ו May 21–23, 2026



## בואו נדבר על זה

Tell Me More About This!

The Torah teaches that Shavuot is the holiday of the beginning of the harvest (Shemot 23:16 and Vayikra 23:10). The Talmud teaches that Shavuot was the day that God gave us the Torah on הר סיני (Har Sinai, Mount Sinai) (Pesachim 68b).

It is common for communities to learn Torah on Shavuot, especially staying up the whole first night to do so. This is called תקון ליל שבועות (tikkun leyl Shavuot). Some communities recite and learn a very specific set of passages from different parts of the Torah, and others have Torah learning of all types.

On Shavuot morning, we relive Benei Yisrael's experience at Har Sinai by reading about מתן תורה (matan Torah, the giving of the Torah) in Parashat Yitro. This is a way for us to receive the Torah for ourselves again, each year.

How to get ready for this awesome experience?



### Or Ha-Hayyim (Morocco, 300 years ago)

There are three main ways to prepare for receiving the Torah... The first is trying really hard to learn Torah... because you won't really understand it without a lot of effort.

### אור החיים שמות פרשת יתרו פרק יט

ג' ענינים הם עקרי ההכנה לקבלת התורה... הא' הוא התגברות והתעצמות בעסק התורה... ותראה כי לא תשג ההשגה אלא בהתעצמות גדול.

- ◆ The Or Ha-Hayyim seems to be saying that the first thing to do to prepare for receiving the Torah is to... learn Torah! What is that supposed to mean? Why is learning Torah a good way to prepare yourself to receive it?
- ◆ How could staying up to learn Torah all night before reading about receiving it in the morning be a way of putting the Or Ha-Hayyim's idea into practice?



## מְדַרְשׁ • Midrash

### What's Torah like?

#### Devarim Rabbah

The Sages say that there are five things that represent Torah: water, wine, honey, milk, and olive oil.

#### דברים רבה ז:

רָבְנוּ אַמְרֵי בְּחַמְשָׁה דְּבָרִים נִמְשָׁלָה  
הַתּוֹרָה: בְּמַיִם, וּבְיַיִן, וּבְדִבְשׁ,  
וּבְחֵלֶב, וּבְשֶׁמֶן.

Look them up!

Water - Yeshayahu 55:1

Wine - Mishlei 9:5

Honey and Milk - Shir Ha-Shirim 4:11

Oil - Shir Ha-Shirim 1:3

Our Rabbis find pesukim all around Tanakh about these five different liquids. They notice that each pasuk can also be understood to be talking about Torah!

- ◆ Why compare Torah to other things? What are the Sages trying to learn or teach about the Torah? Why is it so important to them to wonder what Torah is like?

The continuation of the midrash lists some ways that olive oil and Torah are alike. Here are three.

1. When you make olive oil, it begins bitter but is sweet in the end. It's the same with words of Torah. A person struggles in the beginning, but it turns out good in the end....

1. מֵהַ שֶׁמֶן הַזֶּה תִּחְלָתוּ מֵרַ וְסוֹפּוֹ  
מֵתוֹק, כִּי הוּא דְּבָרֵי תּוֹרָה, אֲדָם  
מִצָּטְעֵר בְּהוּ בְּתַחֲלָה וְעוֹשֶׂה בְּהוּ  
אַחֲרַיִת טוֹבָה....

2. Another interpretation: Just as olive oil brings life to the world (because it's healthy and nourishing), the Torah also brings life to the world.

2. דְּבָר אַחֵר, מֵהַ שֶׁמֶן הַזֶּה  
חַיִּים לְעוֹלָם אִף דְּבָרֵי תּוֹרָה חַיִּים  
לְעוֹלָם.

3. Just as olive oil brings light to the world (because it can be used to fuel oil lamps), the words of the Torah also bring light to the world.

3. מֵהַ שֶׁמֶן הַזֶּה אוֹרָה לְעוֹלָם אִף  
דְּבָרֵי תּוֹרָה אוֹרָה לְעוֹלָם.

- ◆ How do words of Torah get sweeter over time? How does this connect to Or Ha-Hayyim on p. 1?
- ◆ How is the Torah like a healthy, nourishing food? How does the Torah bring life to the world? Can you think of more than one way?
- ◆ What kind of light does Torah bring to the world? What's the difference between bringing life and bringing light?

Another midrash lists some ways that water and Torah are alike. Here are three.

### שיר השירים רבה א:ב

1. מַה הַמַּיִם מְשִׁיבִין הַנֶּפֶשׁ... כִּד תּוֹרָה....
2. מַה הַמַּיִם מְטַהְרִים אֶת הָאָדָם מִטְּמֵאָה... כִּד תּוֹרָה מְטַהֶרֶת הַטְּמֵא מִטְּמֵאָתוֹ....
3. וּמַה הַמַּיִם מְנִיחִין מְקוֹם גְּבוּהָ וְהוֹלְכִים בְּמְקוֹם נְמוּדָה, כִּד תּוֹרָה מְנַחֶת מִי שֶׁדַּעְתּוֹ גְּבוּהָה עָלָיו, וּמַדְבִּקֶת בְּמִי שֶׁדַּעְתּוֹ נְמוּכָה עָלָיו....

### Shir Ha-Shirim Rabbah

1. Water is refreshing to your soul... and so is Torah....
2. Water purifies people from impurity... and so does Torah....
3. Water flows from high places to low places, and Torah leaves people who think highly of themselves and sticks to humble people....

- ◆ **Try it out!** When you learn Torah, imagine yourself becoming refreshed, pure, and more humble. What does that feel like? How can learning Torah help you have each of these experiences?
- ◆ Why is Torah like wine, honey, and milk? Can you come up with some ways to explain these comparisons?





# משנה • Mishnah

Ready to become a Torah scholar? This mishnah says there are 48 qualities you need. Here are a few of them:

מסכת אבות פרק ו משנה ו  
Mishnah Avot 6:6

אוהב את המקום  
Loving God



אוהב את הבריות  
Loving people



אוהב את הצדקות  
Loving righteous behavior



אוהב את המישרים  
Loving ethical behavior



אוהב את התוכחות  
Loving being told how to improve



מתרחק מן הקבוד  
Keeping far away from honors



ולא מגיס לבו בתלמוד  
Not getting arrogant from your learning



ואינו שמח בהוראה  
Not enjoying making legal decisions



נושא בעל עם חברו...  
Feeling the pain of others...



- ◆ How could each of these qualities be a way to receive the Torah?
- ◆ Which of these qualities surprise you? Why might the more surprising ones be important?
- ◆ This mishnah sets a high standard! Not many people love getting told what to do differently, and most people enjoy being honored. Which of the qualities on the list are most challenging for you? Can you think of people in your life (or people in the Torah) who have these qualities? What are some ways to help yourself grow in these areas?