

THE TRIBE WEEKLY

SHAVUOT

11-13 JUNE | 6-7 SIVAN

A Time to Reflect



MATTY ROSENBLATT

Youth Director at
Hadley Wood Jewish
Community

Over 3000 years ago, we stood at Mount Sinai and committed to being a 'light unto the nations', a holy nation that brings God into this world. Shavuot marks the anniversary of this pivotal moment in Jewish history, when we received the Torah and began our covenant with the Almighty.

In the Talmud (*Succah* 42a), we encounter a profound teaching about the foundational principles we impart to our children. It tells us that when a child reaches the age where they begin to speak, we teach them two fundamental truths: firstly, "*Torah tziva lanu Moshe* - Moses commanded us

the Torah," and secondly, "*Shema Yisrael, Hashem Eloheinu, Hashem echad* - Listen, Israel, Hashem is our God, Hashem is One." One might wonder why the order isn't reversed, with monotheism (belief in one God) taking precedence. But therein lies a profound lesson: our religion begins with relationship. It's this bond with the Divine, represented by the Torah, that defines our faith. Without it, our beliefs lose their depth and meaning.

Shavuot, the festival commemorating the giving of the Torah at Sinai, serves as an annual opportunity to renew and strengthen this relationship. It's a time to start afresh, to reconnect with our spiritual roots, and to infuse our lives with the presence of the Divine.

The counting of the Omer leading up to Shavuot isn't merely a countdown (after all, we count upwards!); it's a journey of anticipation, a soulful yearning

for the moment when we can once again stand before God and recommit ourselves to His teachings. This anticipation is palpable in the air as we approach Shavuot. Like our ancestors who stood at Sinai, we too approach this holy day with a mixture of awe and eagerness.

As we celebrate Shavuot, let us embrace the opportunity for spiritual renewal and growth. May this festival be a time of deep connection with the Divine, a reawakening of our souls, and a reaffirmation of our commitment to walking in God's ways. Moreover, let us reflect on our broader mission—to be a light unto the nations and to bring God's presence into the world. Are we truly embodying this sacred purpose in our daily lives? Let Shavuot serve as a moment to realign our goals and intentions, ensuring that we continue to shine brightly with the values of compassion, justice and righteousness that define our faith.

Shavuot Crossword

Across

2. What does Shavuot mean in English?
4. How many days do we count between Pesach and Shavuot?
6. Which megillah is read on Shavuot?
8. In which Jewish month did we receive the Torah?

Down

1. Number of books in the Torah.
3. On which mountain was the Torah given?
5. In addition to 2 down, what is another meaning of the word *shavuot*?
7. How many commandments were written on the tablets?

