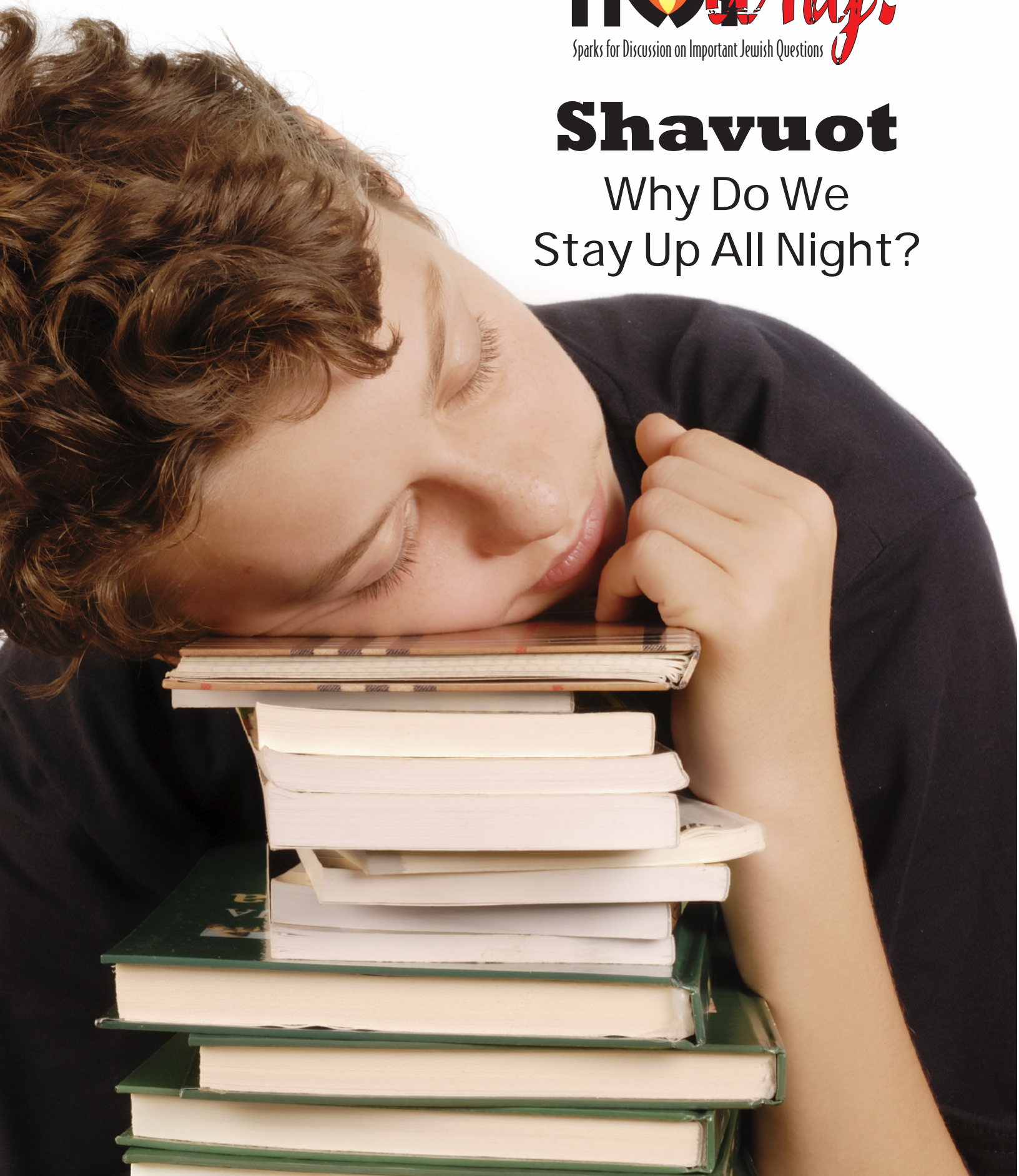




Shavuot

Why Do We Stay Up All Night?



SHAVUOT:

“WHY DO WE STAY UP ALL NIGHT LEARNING?”

CLI YAKAR, VAYIKRA 23:16

“You shall offer a *new* offering [of two loaves] to God.” This is a sign that Shavuot was the day of the Giving of the Torah, because the Torah must be new to a person, as if he received it from Mount Sinai that very day.



The reason that the Torah does not explicitly mention that this is the day of the Giving of the Torah ... [is because] God did not want to limit the Giving of the Torah to a single day, for a person should feel every single day of the year as if he received the Torah from Mount Sinai on that day ...

Similarly, the Sages have said that the words of Torah should be new to a person every day, not like something old which he can no longer tolerate. The truth is that one can certainly find something new in the Torah every day. Therefore, the Torah did not specify the day that it was given, apart from the hint in the word “new,” to teach that the Torah is like a new offering every day.

RABBI E.E. DESSLER, STRIVE FOR TRUTH, VOL. 4, PG. 49

Each Shavuot ... we spiritually arrive at that same point of sanctity experienced by our forefathers at Mount Sinai. It is once again, in a real sense, “The time of the Giving of our Torah,” and we are invited to accept it anew, as they did 3,300 years ago.

On Shavuot, we have to work in order to receive the Torah. We have to struggle to acquire it in our hearts. We have to appreciate its truths as unchangeable verities ... the nation still harbored lingering doubts ... Only when they heard God’s voice at Sinai was doubt replaced by absolute certainty. So too, when we learn Torah today, and especially at Shavuot time, we can, if we wish, still hear that same voice.



SHIR HASHIRIM (SONG OF SONGS) RABBAH 1:12:2

God came first [to Mount Sinai] as the verse states... "On the third morning, God descended before the eyes of the nation." The Jews were sleeping all night, because the sleep of Atzeret is very sweet and the night is short...



God came and found them sleeping. He began to wake them with loud blasts, as the verse says, "On the third day, in the morning, there were sounds and thunder." Moshe woke up the people and brought them out before the King of kings, the Holy One, Blessed is He.

MAGEN AVRAHAM, ORACH CHAIM 494

The Zohar says that the early pious ones would stay awake all night on Shavuot and learn Torah. Nowadays, our custom is for most learned people to do so. Perhaps the reason is based on the fact that the Israelites slept all night long and God had to wake them when He wanted to give them the Torah, as it says in the Midrash, and therefore we must repair this.



RABBI YITZCHAK BERKOVITZ, THE JERUSALEM KOLLEL

On Shavuot, there is a special reason to stay up all night learning Torah. Even if one would argue that you can learn more hours during Shavuot by keeping to a regular schedule, the goal here is different. We are showing our uncompromised, extraordinary dedication to the study of Torah on the day on which the Torah was given to the Jewish people.

KAF HACHAIM

Learning on Shavuot night with joy and enthusiasm is valued very highly in Heaven, and it has great impact on the higher worlds. He who learns fervently will be richly rewarded.



SIFSEI TZADDIK

All night we are filled with awe and longing for Kabbalas HaTorah (Receiving the Torah). How could we fall asleep? The overwhelming anticipation keeps us up all night!

SFAS EMES

By staying awake, we demonstrate our love of the Torah. The desire to learn is not like the desire for the physical pleasures of the world. The more one indulges in physical pleasure, the less desire he has for it. But with Torah - the more you learn, the greater the appetite for learning. Learning Torah all night on Shavuot heightens our desire to receive the Torah in the morning.



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CHIDA, KAF HACHAIM 494:35

One who originates innovative Torah insights on Shavuot will create more Torah insights throughout the year. One who is unable to create new Torah thoughts should at the very least study Torah topics he never learned before.

RABBI SHALOM BREZOVSKY, NESIVOS SHALOM, MOADIM, VOL. II, PG. 334

It is written in the holy books that just as the Torah is eternal, the ability to receive the Torah is eternal. Each and every year on Shavuot our ability to receive the Torah is renewed. This is what we recite in our prayers and in Kiddush: "The time of the Giving of our Torah." This does not mean merely that we have a festival that reminds us that God gave us the Torah in the past. Rather, each and every year on Shavuot is again the time of the Giving of the Torah.



MISHNAH BERURA 494:1

In the Shulchan Aruch Ha'Ari it says: You should know that anyone who does not sleep at all on the night of Shavuot but stays awake and learns Torah is guaranteed that he will fulfill his potential during the coming year, and no harm will befall him.