

# The Shul

at the Lubavitch Center

6701 Old Pimlico Road  
Baltimore, MD 21209

[www.chabadshul.org](http://www.chabadshul.org)



May 22-23, 2026

Shavuot

6-7 Sivan, 5786

## Is The Torah Relevant to My Life?

When I first meet with new bar or bat mitzvah students, I ask them to please define some simple terms in Judaism, terms that are familiar to them. This is a challenging exercise, one that teaches at the outset that simplicity does not imply ease.

One of the words I ask my young charges to define is "Torah." The question escapes my lips; a dubious smile appears on the youngster's face. I allow the question to linger in the air. Usually, an awkward silence ensues. Guesses are launched and shot down in succession, as eyes scan walls and ceilings for traces of a clue or perhaps a hidden portal home... Finally, both teacher and student embrace the stark reality and glorious respite brought about by three simple words: "I don't know."

The word Torah means "instruction." Another way of saying that is "teaching."

The ability to summon up the correct definition to the word "Torah" may not be as important as the ability to properly contextualize the Torah in our lives, but these may in fact be two sides of the same coin. In other words: how many of us can say that Torah is the primary source of "instruction" or "teaching" in our lives?



Photo by Chana Lewis

If we were to list the areas of greatest concern in our lives (or things that take up the most space in our lives) we would find a diversity of items. Some things, however, I am sure would be quite common to many of us. They might be:

1. marriage and dating
2. career and money
3. happiness
4. health
5. children
6. recreation and fun
7. personal development
8. education
9. politics
10. friends and relatives
11. global conflicts and environmental issues.

If you'd like to, make your own list, or just use the list above. And for each item on the list, ask yourself the following simple questions: Do I look to the Torah as the principal source of guidance in this area of my life? Do I view the Torah as "instructional" or as "teachings" to personally apply?

If the Torah lacks relevance to us, and we do not associate it with the real-time, everyday parts of our lives, then there is a gap between what the Torah is intended to be and what it actually is in our lives.

The Torah is not meant to be a history book. It isn't meant to be a topic for academic research and university-style study. It isn't meant to be a cultural remnant. It isn't meant only for the Orthodox or the rabbis. The Torah is meant to be relevant. Relevant to each and every one of us; relevant to each and every area of our lives; relevant to our most noble dreams and to our most dishonorable indulgences.

*(continued on the other side)*

The famous Maggid of Dubno once told the story of a country boy whose fame as an archer had spread far and wide. A delegation of the finest archers traveled to his farm estate in order to see for themselves if the rumors were true. As they approached the estate, they observed hundreds upon hundreds of trees, each one painted with a target, and in the center of each bull's-eye there was a single arrow. Amazed at the sight, they asked the lad how it was that he had become such a fine shot. He replied plainly that he would shoot the arrow first and then paint the target around it.

Although this is a ludicrous way to become a sharpshooter, the story contains a great lesson about how to make Torah a part of our lives.

For many, the bull's-eye of life has been drawn and positioned. Every concern and ambition in life is painted on according to priority and value. We decide how we want our lives to be and then do our best to construct them on the canvas of reality. After the paint is dry, we attempt to shoot the arrow of Torah into the picture, to find the place where the Torah can fit harmoniously into the landscape of our values, our goals, our ideals, our lifestyle, our tastes and our definitions.

Like an archer's arrow piercing wood, forcing its presence into an otherwise serene and picturesque tree, thrashing its very target in its wake, Torah's presence in our lives appears with a resounding dissonance. Remarkable in its lack of relevance, deficient of urgency, unimportant in any practical context; at best the shot lands on the periphery; most often it misses the target entirely. We are left with a Torah we can't define and certainly not one that defines us.

Perhaps that is why we have seen the need to redefine Torah so that we can merge it into the context of our lives, somehow wishing that it would be the reflection of us and not the other way around. Will we force history's pen to write a new definition of Torah for a modern age, or will we one day see that Torah has been the author all the while?

Can we find the strength to bridge the gap of relevance? The courage to face the Torah as our guide; to question, to learn, to seek, and to find?

*(by Rabbi Ilan Weinberg from www.chabad.org)*



Two flower displays on the Bima during Shavuot are being sponsored by  
**Friends of Louie Leder — Eliezer Yaakov ben Dovid Moshe**  
 in memory of his yahrzeit which was on 1 Sivan.

**Yahrzeits This Week:**

Binyomin Gutman	7 Sivan - Friday night / Shabbat-Shavuot	for brother	Dovid ben Avraham
Marsha Blumberg	8 Sivan - Saturday night / Sunday	for father	Nathan Brenner
Marvin Itzkowitz	12 Sivan - Wednesday night / Thursday	for mother	Esther Seryl bas Mordechai Markel

**DAVENING AND SHIURIM SCHEDULE**

**Thursday — Erev Shavuot, 5/21 — 5 Sivan**

Shacharit — 6:50 a.m.  
 Eruv Tavshilin  
 Minchah — 8:00 p.m.  
 Yom Tov Candles — 8:00 p.m.  
 Ma'ariv — 9:01 p.m.

**Friday — Shavuot, 5/22 — 6 Sivan**

Shacharit — 9:30 a.m.  
 Shabbat / Yom Tov Candles — 8:01 p.m.  
 Minchah / Ma'ariv — 7:00 p.m.

**Shabbat — Shavuot, 5/23 — 7 Sivan**

Shacharit 9:00 a.m.  
 Sof Z'man Kriat Shema — 9:22 a.m.  
 Yizkor — after 10:45 a.m.  
 Minchah — 7:50 p.m.  
 Shkiah — 8:21 p.m.  
 Ma'ariv — 9:08 p.m.

**Sunday, 5/24 — 8 Sivan**

Shacharit — 8:00 a.m.  
 Minchah / Ma'ariv — 8:10 p.m.

**Monday — Memorial Day, 5/25 — 9 Sivan**

Shacharit — 8:00 a.m.  
 Minchah / Ma'ariv — 8:10 p.m.

**Tuesday, 5/26 — 10 Sivan**

Shacharit — 7:00 a.m.  
 Minchah / Ma'ariv — 8:10 p.m.

**Wednesday, 5/27 — 11 Sivan**

Shacharit — 7:00 a.m.  
 Minchah / Ma'ariv — 8:10 p.m.

**Thursday, 5/28 — 12 Sivan**

Shacharit — 6:50 a.m.  
 Minchah / Ma'ariv — 8:10 p.m.

**Friday, 5/29 — 13 Sivan**

Shacharit — 7:00 a.m.  
 Shabbat — 8:07 p.m.  
 Minchah / Ma'ariv — 7:00 p.m.