

## Laws & Customs

### New Home

Establishing the Jewish identity of the home from the onset is a way to make the house a vessel for all sorts of blessings.

- According to an age-old Jewish custom, the first items brought into a new home are bread and salt. Some say the reason is because bread -- the basic staple of human sustenance -- is a metaphor for the prosperity we hope will accompany the inhabitants of this new home; and salt, which never decays, spoils, or loses its flavor, symbolizes the permanence of this new home.

- It is also recommended to bring some Jewish books and a charity box into the home as part of the first moving items. This establishes the Jewish flavor of the home; a home which will hopefully be a haven of study and kindness.

- Tuesday is the most propitious day of the week for scheduling the actual move, for it is the only day when G-d saw that "it is good" twice (the third day of creation).

- Shortly after entering a new home (even if being rented), it is customary to host a *Chanukat Habayit* (home dedication) party. At this gathering the *mezuzot* are affixed, words of *Torah* are spoken and family and friends use the occasion to express their blessings and wishes for a fruitful and happy stay in this new home.



### Wedding Contract

When Moses came down from Mount Sinai he shattered the tablets at the sight of the golden calf. G-d commended Moses for shattering the tablets because Moses understood them to be the "wedding contract" that implicated the Jewish people in being unfaithful to their "husband," God.

Moses surely appreciated the tablets' awesome spiritual value. "The tablets were the work of God, and the writing was the writing of God." Moses had himself received them directly from God's hand. Yet, when he saw that they posed a danger to the Jewish people, he did not hesitate. Only a minority of the people, the most depraved among them, had sinned. But Moses did not even wait for God's approval; he immediately smashed the holy tablets in order to protect his flock from punishment.

This was Moses' true greatness: he not only gave *himself* up completely for his people, he was even willing to sacrifice the Torah that he had personally received from God for the sake of the lowliest of his flock. This ultimate act of self-sacrifice expresses the depth of Moses' love for each and every Jew.

י"ד - ט"ו אדר א'  
**February 18-19 2011**  
**Candle Lighting**  
**5:55**  
**Shabbat Ends**  
**6:50**

**In Honor of the  
 Klein Family**

### True Blessing

*The mounting trepidation electrified the air as the Yom Kippur service was nearing its end in the Barditchev synagogue. All had gathered on this, the holiest of days, to beg the Almighty to forgive their failings of the past year.*

*Suddenly, Rabbi Levi Yitzchok, the Rebbe of Barditchev, climbed onto the podium in the center of the crowded synagogue and addressed the Almighty:*

*"Master Of The Universe! We all know the law that 'In the case of doubt, one is not to make a blessing which contains G-d's name.' For to utter Your holy name in vain is a grave offense. So it is preferable to perhaps forgo a necessary blessing than to risk an unnecessary one.*

*"Master Of The Universe! Surely You do not wish to cause the violation of your own Torah?! Here Your people have just proclaimed: 'Blessed are You G-d, king of the universe, Who forgives and forgoes our sins, and the sins of His nation, the house of Israel...' Now, we certainly cannot allow this to become a 'blessing in vain!' Obviously, You have no choice but to forgive them..."*

### Saying

**"Where a lantern is placed, those who seek light gather around - for light attracts."**

**Rabbi Yosef Yitchak Schneerson**