



Birkat Halebana BH this Mosae Shabbat!

13TH OF IYAR 5782
MAY 14TH, 2022
CANDLE LIGHTING 7:40PM
SHABBAT ENDS 8:40PM



**TURNING OURSELVES
 INTO SAPPHIRE**

**NOT ONLY A MITZVAH, BUT
 GOOD FINANCIAL ADVICE AS WELL**

**STRIVING FOR
 PERFECTION**

PARASHAT EMOR

Synagogue: 310 - 95th Street, Surfside, FL 33154 **Website:** www.hechalshalom.org **Tel:** (305) 867-6024
Mailing Address: Ness 26 Inc P.O. Box 546632 Surfside, FL 33154 **E-mail:** info@hechalshalom.org | oroziel.bookkeeper@gmail.com

THIS WEEK'S BULLETIN HAS BEEN KINDLY SPONSORED LEILUY NISHMAT
 שלמה בן יעקב ז"ל, BY HIS DEAR FAMILY.



זמני היום - חודש אייר / תשפ"ב

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Daylight saving time															אייר		תשפ"ב			
May 2022		לילה לרבינו תם R' Tam's Nightfall		לילה Nightfall	שקיעת החמה Sun set	הדלקת נרות Candle Lighting	פלג המנחה Plag Mincha	מנחה קטנה Mincha Ketana	מנחה גדולה Earliest Mincha	חצות Mid day	סוף זמן תפילה Latest Shachris	סוף זמן קריאת שמע Latest Shema	הנץ החמה Sun rise	זמן ציצית ותפילין Earliest Talis	עלות השחר 72 דקות Dawn 72 Minutes	דף היומי Daf Yomi				
		במילוט דקות 16.1°	במילוט דקות 16.1°	במילוט דקות 16.1°	במילוט דקות 16.1°	18 דקות	רבי"א ובעל התניא	רבי"א התניא	-	חצות יום ועל דליה	רבי"א ובעל התניא	במילוט דקות 16.1°	במילוט דקות 16.1°	10.2 מעלות	דקות שנות	במילוט דקות 16.1°	יבמות -	שני	א	
2	Mon	9:05	9:06	8:29	7:52	ראש חודש	6:30	5:07	1:51	1:17	11:06	10:00	9:24	9:23	6:43	5:59	5:30	5:29	נו	שני
3	Tue	9:05	9:07	8:30	7:52		6:30	5:08	1:51	1:17	11:05	9:59	9:23	9:23	6:43	5:58	5:30	5:28	זו	שלישי
4	Wed	9:06	9:08	8:30	7:53		6:30	5:08	1:51	1:17	11:05	9:59	9:23	9:22	6:42	5:57	5:29	5:27	נח	רביעי
5	Thu	9:07	9:09	8:31	7:54		6:31	5:08	1:51	1:17	11:05	9:59	9:23	9:22	6:41	5:57	5:28	5:26	נט	חמישי
6	Fri	9:07	9:09	8:32	7:54		6:31	5:09	1:51	1:17	11:04	9:58	9:22	9:21	6:41	5:56	5:28	5:26	ס	ששי
7	Sha	9:08	9:10	8:32	7:55	[קדושים]	6:32	5:09	1:51	1:17	11:04	9:58	9:22	9:21	6:40	5:55	5:27	5:25	סא	שבת
8	Sun	9:08	9:11	8:33	7:55		6:32	5:09	1:51	1:17	11:04	9:57	9:21	9:20	6:39	5:54	5:26	5:24	סב	ראשון
9	Mon	9:09	9:11	8:34	7:56		6:33	5:09	1:51	1:17	11:04	9:57	9:21	9:20	6:39	5:53	5:26	5:23	סג	שני
10	Tue	9:09	9:12	8:34	7:56		6:33	5:10	1:51	1:17	11:03	9:57	9:21	9:19	6:38	5:53	5:25	5:22	סד	שלישי
11	Wed	9:10	9:13	8:35	7:57		6:33	5:10	1:51	1:17	11:03	9:56	9:20	9:19	6:37	5:52	5:24	5:21	סה	רביעי
12	Thu	9:10	9:14	8:35	7:57		6:34	5:10	1:51	1:17	11:03	9:56	9:20	9:19	6:37	5:51	5:24	5:21	סו	חמישי
13	Fri	9:11	9:14	8:36	7:58		6:34	5:11	1:51	1:17	11:03	9:56	9:20	9:18	6:36	5:51	5:23	5:20	סז	ששי
14	Sha	9:11	9:15	8:37	7:58	[אמור]	6:35	5:11	1:51	1:17	11:03	9:56	9:20	9:18	6:36	5:50	5:23	5:19	סח	שבת
15	Sun	9:12	9:16	8:37	7:59	פסח שני	6:35	5:11	1:51	1:17	11:02	9:55	9:19	9:18	6:35	5:49	5:22	5:18	סט	ראשון
16	Mon	9:12	9:16	8:38	7:59		6:35	5:12	1:51	1:17	11:02	9:55	9:19	9:17	6:35	5:49	5:22	5:18	ע	שני
17	Tue	9:13	9:17	8:38	8:00		6:36	5:12	1:51	1:17	11:02	9:55	9:19	9:17	6:34	5:48	5:21	5:17	עא	שלישי
18	Wed	9:13	9:18	8:39	8:00		6:36	5:12	1:51	1:17	11:02	9:55	9:19	9:17	6:34	5:48	5:21	5:17	עב	רביעי
19	Thu	9:14	9:19	8:40	8:01	ל"ג בעומר	6:37	5:13	1:51	1:17	11:02	9:54	9:18	9:16	6:33	5:47	5:20	5:16	עג	חמישי
20	Fri	9:15	9:19	8:40	8:02	7:44 [בהר]	6:37	5:13	1:51	1:17	11:02	9:54	9:18	9:16	6:33	5:47	5:20	5:15	עד	ששי
21	Sha	9:15	9:20	8:41	8:02		6:38	5:13	1:52	1:17	11:02	9:54	9:18	9:16	6:32	5:46	5:19	5:15	עה	שבת
22	Sun	9:16	9:21	8:41	8:03		6:38	5:14	1:52	1:17	11:02	9:54	9:18	9:16	6:32	5:46	5:19	5:14	עו	ראשון
23	Mon	9:16	9:21	8:42	8:03		6:38	5:14	1:52	1:17	11:02	9:54	9:18	9:15	6:32	5:45	5:19	5:14	עז	שני
24	Tue	9:17	9:22	8:43	8:04		6:39	5:14	1:52	1:17	11:01	9:54	9:18	9:15	6:31	5:45	5:18	5:13	עח	שלישי
25	Wed	9:17	9:23	8:43	8:04		6:39	5:15	1:52	1:17	11:01	9:54	9:18	9:15	6:31	5:44	5:18	5:13	עט	רביעי
26	Thu	9:18	9:23	8:44	8:05		6:40	5:15	1:52	1:17	11:01	9:53	9:17	9:15	6:31	5:44	5:18	5:12	פ	חמישי
27	Fri	9:18	9:24	8:44	8:05		6:40	5:15	1:52	1:17	11:01	9:53	9:17	9:15	6:30	5:44	5:17	5:12	פא	ששי
28	Sha	9:19	9:25	8:45	8:06	7:47 [בחקות]	6:41	5:16	1:52	1:17	11:01	9:53	9:17	9:14	6:30	5:43	5:17	5:11	פב	שבת
29	Sun	9:19	9:25	8:45	8:06		6:41	5:16	1:53	1:18	11:01	9:53	9:17	9:14	6:30	5:43	5:17	5:11	פג	ראשון
30	Mon	9:20	9:26	8:46	8:07		6:41	5:16	1:53	1:18	11:01	9:53	9:17	9:14	6:30	5:43	5:17	5:11	פד	שני

Monday (May 30) 6:04 PM + 2 מולד חודש סיון: חלקים

Get FREE daily sefirah reminders by text or email > <http://alerts.myzmanim.com>

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SHABBAT SCHEDULE

1st Mincha 6:00pm

Followed by Shir Hashirim, Kabbalat Shabbat/Arvit

2nd Minyan Shir Hashirim 7:00pm

2nd Minyan Mincha 7:15pm

Candle Lighting: 7:40pm

Shaharit Netz Minyan: 5:35am

Shaharit: 8:45am

Zeman Keriat Shema 9:18am

2nd Zeman Keriat Shema 9:56am

Shiur 6:25pm

Mincha: 7:20pm

Followed by Seudat Shelishit & Arvit

Shabbat Ends: 8:40pm

Rabbenu Tam 9:11pm

Pesah Shenit is this Mosae Shabbat, Sunday. Lag Baomer is this coming Wednesday night, Thursday. Haircuts are permitted this Friday morning on Lad Baomer!

Our Hillula & Hachnasat Sefer Torah is this coming Wednesday evening! Lag Baomer Family Event Sunday May 22

This week we are reading the Third Perek of Pirke Avot. Anyone interested in Reading please contact the Rabbi.

WEEKLY SCHEDULE SUNDAY

Shaharit: 6:00am

Shaharit #2 Hodu 8:30am

Mincha 6:20pm

Followed by Arvit

MONDAY TO FRIDAY

Shaharit 6:00am

Daf Yomi 7:15am

Shaharit #2 Hodu 8:00am

Mincha/Arvit 6:20pm

Shiur in Spanish 6:50pm

Shiurim 6:50pm

Night Kollel 7:30pm

We would like to remind our Kahal Kadosh to please Donate wholeheartedly towards our Beautiful Kehila. Please contact us if you're interested in donating for any occasion, Avot Ubanim \$120, Kiddush \$350, Seudat Shelishit \$275, Weekly Bulletin \$150, Weekly Daf Yomi \$180, Daf Yomi Masechet \$2500, Yearly Daf Yomi \$5000, Weekly Breakfast \$150, Daily Learning \$180, Weekly Learning \$613, Monthly Rent \$3500, Monthly Learning \$2000, Children's Shabbat Program \$500 & Weekly program \$613. Weekly Safrut Program \$360. Thanking you in advance for your generous support. Tizke Lemitzvot!

Donors Column

בס"ד

We Sincerely Thank you for your generous contributions this Week! We truly appreciate it! Hashem should Bless you all with Health, Happiness, Parnasah Tova, Success, & All the Berachot of the Torah Amen!

- **Dr. Mario Berkowitz**
- **Mr. Richard Moore**
- **Mr. Amichai Shoshan**
- **Mr. Nat Perez**
- **Mr. Benjamin Akkad**
- **Mrs. Sari Ackerman**
- **Mr. Jacky Benoudiz**
- **Mr. Abraham Aboksis**
- **Mr. Amram Mouyal**
- **Mr. Jacky Werta**
- **Mr. Jonathan Borochoff**

- **Mrs. Raquel Eisen Benoudiz**
We are excited to announce Avot Ubanim every Shabbat will continue at 5:30pm followed by Children's program at 6:25pm with Rabbi Fried & Mishnayot with R' Ariel Cohen.
BH we Launched our Kinyan Masechta program & we have lots of Success. We are continuing Monday, Tuesday, & Wednesdays after Arvit. We are doing Early Minha & Arvit.

Rabbi Ariel Cohen has joined in giving Mishnayot learning to the older boys before Minha & during Seudat Shelishit. Jonathan Eddeirai is giving Shiur to the teens during Seudat Shelishit BH.

We are excited to announce that our Night Kollel continues to grow.

We are trying to get the Baale Batim involved in learning. Please come & join! We are excited to announce that we are starting a new learning program on Friday mornings from 9-11am.

If anyone would like to contact our Synagogue, please feel free to email info@hechalshalom.org

Torah Teasers (AISH)

1. In this parsha, which sin is punishable by burning? What 4 places in the Torah is fire explicitly used as a punishment?
2. In this parsha, which law involves the sun?
3. In this parsha, which three laws refer to broken bones?
4. In what two contexts is the "eighth day" mentioned in this parsha?
5. Which offering contains leavened bread (*chametz*)? Where else in the Torah does an offering contain leavened bread?
6. Which two of the seven species of the land of Israel, explicitly appear in this parsha?
7. In this parsha, which seven laws explicitly mention the number seven?
8. In this parsha, which two laws involve the number seven - but the number seven is not mentioned in the description?
9. In this parsha, which item is described as "braided"? What other item in the Torah is braided?
10. In this parsha, which law refers to the numbers twelve, six, two, and one?

Answers

- 1) In this parsha, adultery committed by a Kohen's daughter is punishable by burning (Leviticus 21:9). Elsewhere: in parshat Vayera, the entire city of Sodom is burned with sulfur and fire (Genesis 19:24). In parshat Shmini, Aharon's sons, Nadav and Avihu, are burned with fire (Leviticus 10:2). In parshat Beha'alosecha, fire consumes the complainers (Numbers 11:1). In parshat Korach, the 250 men who joined the rebellion are burned with fire (ibid. 16:35).
- 2) A ritually impure person who purifies himself in a mikveh must wait for sunset to be considered completely pure (Leviticus 22:7).
- 3) A Kohen with a broken bone is disqualified from serving in the Tabernacle (Leviticus 21:19). An animal with a broken bone cannot be brought as an offering (Leviticus 22:22). If someone breaks another person's bone, he must compensate the victim (Leviticus 24:20).
- 4) An animal is only fit as an offering starting from the eighth day after its birth (Leviticus 22:27). The festival of Shmini Atzeret is on the eighth day of Sukkot (Leviticus 23:36).
- 5) The sacrifice of the "Two Loaves" (shte halechem) brought on Shavuot are leavened bread (Leviticus 23:17). In parshat Tzav, the loaves accompanying the Thanksgiving offering are of leavened bread (Leviticus 7:13).
- 6) Dates are mentioned in the command to take a branch of the date-palm tree on Sukkot (Leviticus 23:40). Olives are mentioned in the command to light the menorah in the Tabernacle with pure olive oil (Leviticus 24:2).
- 7) (1) An animal must be with its mother for seven days before it can be brought as a sacrifice (Leviticus 22:27). (2) The holiday of Passover is seven days (Leviticus 23:6). (3) We count seven weeks from Passover to Shavuot (Leviticus 23:15). (4) Seven sheep are brought on Shavuot, along with the grain offering (Leviticus 23:18). (5) Rosh Hashana is celebrated in the seventh month of the year (Leviticus 23:24). (6) Yom Kippur is celebrated on the 10th day of the seventh month (Leviticus 23:27). (7) The holiday of Sukkot involves multiple sevens: The holiday begins on the 15th day of the seventh month (Leviticus 23:34) and lasts seven days (Leviticus 23:34). Sitting in the sukkah (Leviticus 23:42) and waving the four species applies for seven days (Leviticus 23:40-41).
- 8) (1) A Kohen is allowed to become ritually impure upon the death of his seven close relatives (Leviticus 21:2-3 with Rashi). (2) This parsha states the command to light the seven-branched menorah (Leviticus 24:4).
- 9) In this parsha, the myrtle branches taken on Sukkot are called "a branch with braided leaves" (Leviticus 23:40). The chains that attach the High Priest breastplate to the apron are called "a braided work" (Exodus 28:14).
- 10) These are all descriptions of the Showbread, the loaves placed on the golden table in the Tabernacle. There are "twelve" loaves, placed in sets of "six" loaves each. Each ("one") loaf is kneaded with "two" solid measurements of flour (Leviticus 24:5-7).

Community Announcements

(It is YOUR Community, make the most of it!)

Miscellaneous Announcements:

- **This Week's Congregational Kiddush** is still available for Sponsorship!
- **This Week's Seudat Shelishit** is still available for Sponsorship!
- **This Week's Breakfast** is still available for Sponsorship!
- **This Week's Daf Yomi** has been **Kindly Sponsored by Mrs. Raquel Eisen Benoudiz in memory of** her Dear Mother **Silvia Eisen Bat Berele z"l** the 16th of Iyar. Tihye Nishmata Tzerura Bitzror Hahayim Amen!
- **This Week's Learning** has been **Kindly Sponsored by Mr. & Mrs. Arnaud Sitbon in memory of** her Dear Grandfather **Moshi Ben Eliyahu Ayache z"l** the 17th of Iyar. Tihye Nishmato Tzerura Bitzror Hahayim Amen!
- **This Week's Avot Ubanim** has been **Generously Sponsored by Dr. & Mrs. Jean Jacques Edderai in memory of** his Dear Brother **Meir Ben Awicha z"l**. Tihye Nishmato Tzerura Bitzror Hahayim Amen!
- We are trying to update our **Congregant's contact information**. We would like to start sending texts about different Events and Shiurim. We would also like to start emailing the weekly bulletin. **We would like to start a list of Nahalot/Azkarot/Yahrzeits**. We would also like to make a **Refuah Shelema list**. Please send your contact information to the Board at info@hechalshalom.org

Important Message!!!

Eruv Update: Surfside: The Eruv in Surfside now includes the walking paths along the beach. Pushing strollers and carrying is permitted on the paths, but not beyond the path or onto the beach.

Bal Harbour: The Eruv in Bal Harbour included the inner (western) walking path only. The pier at Haulover Cut is not included.

- Before hanging up anything anywhere in the Bet Hakeneset, please seek authorization from the Board. This includes flyers etc.
- Please be advised that prior to bringing any food or drinks for any occasion, you must first seek the authorization from the Board.

Special Announcements

- We are pleased to announce that Ness 26 is part of the **Amazon Charity Program**, which would allow our community to collect 0.5% of all the orders made by any of you on [Amazon.com](https://www.amazon.com). In order to register you need to log on smile.amazon.com and select Ness 26, Inc as the Charitable Organization you want to support, and from then shop on smile.amazon.com instead of www.amazon.com. It won't cost anything more, and is an easy way to contribute to our budget needs.
- Anyone wishing to receive the **Daily Halacha** please send a whatsapp message to Simon Chocron 786-351-1573

Community Calendar:

Refuah Shelema List

Men

- | | |
|--|---|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Yosef Zvi Ben Sara Yosefia, • Mordechai Ben Brucha Malka Shmalo • Yizhak Abraham Ben Sheli, • Yosef Yizhak Ben Sara Hana, • Mordechai Ben Miriam, • Meir Raymond Ben Mathilde • Aviv Ben Luba Miriam • Mordechai Ben Mercedes • Yaacov Refael Ben Alegria • Shalom Gibly Ben Fortuna • Binyamin Simcha Ben Hilla | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Isaac Ben Mesoda, • Haim Ben Marcelle, • Yizhak Ben Simja • Michael Ben Aliza, • Avraham Ben Leah • Menahem Ben Shira • Moshe Ben Rahel • David Ben Freha Rina • Netanel Sayegh Bar Rosa • R' Yosef Abraham • Hachohen Bar Hannah |
|--|---|

Women

- | | |
|--|--|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Simja Bat Esther, • Rachel Bat Sarah, • Nina Bat Rachel, • Gitel Rina Bat Yael, • Miriam Bat Sofy, • Rahma Bat Simha • Esther Bat Fortuna • Malka Bat Dina • Raizel Bat Miriam • Leah Bat Rivka • Sol Bat Perla • Chana Bat Bilha • Yael Bat Rut | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sara Leticia Bat Mesoda, • Alegria Simha Bat Esther, • Naomie Bat Rarel Adda, • Malka Bat Joyce Simja, • Sivan Simha Bat Yehudit, • Natalie Rachel Bat Nancy, • Abigael Haya Bat Esther • Madeleine Bat Esther • Nurit Jacqueline Bat Rahel • Marcelle Mesoda Bat Alegria • Shira Yaffa Bat Sara • Eva Bat Yael Khayat • Camouna Bat Fortuna • Ruth Nehama Bat Sara |
|--|--|

Hechal Shalom / Or Oziel

שויתי ■ הגדי תמיד

We Would like to Wholeheartedly
Thank our Dear Friends,
The Berkowitz Family

For generously
Donating the Rent of
Iyar 5782

Leiluy Nishmat of
his Dear Mother Mary Attias De
Berkowitz (Miriam Bat Raquel & Rafael
z"l) Tihye Nishmata Tzerura Bitzror
Hahayim Amen!

& Hakarat Hatov To Hashem for the
recovery of his Dear Wife Lilian (Svetel
Sara Bat Rachel Hinda) & to the Kehila
for their overwhelming assistance!

& Refuah Shelema to all Hole Am Yisrael
Amen!

We truly appreciate it.

In this Merit,
May Hashem Bless you & your Wonderful
Family with all the Berachot in the Torah Amen.



DAF YOMI SPONSORS



THIS YEAR'S LEARNING OF THE DAF YOMI

IS GENEROUSLY SPONSORED BY

THE KAMHAZI FAMILY

IN MEMORY OF THEIR DEAR FATHER

SHELOMO BEN YAAKOV Z"L

& FOR HATZLACHA OF THE WHOLE FAMILY.

HASHEM SHOULD BLESS THEM WITH

HEALTH, HAPPINESS, & LONG LIFE, AMEN.



THIS YEAR'S LEARNING OF DAF YOMI
IS GENEROUSLY SPONSORED BY

THE AKKAD FAMILY

LEILUY NISHMAT

אברהם בן גרסי-ה ז"ל, שלמה בן תמם ז"ל,
אליהו בן רחל ז"ל, ותמם בת אורו ז"ל
תנצב"ה

HASHEM SHOULD BLESS THEM WITH
HEALTH, HAPPINESS, & LONG LIFE,
AMEN.

THIS YEAR'S LEARNING OF DAF YOMI
IS GENEROUSLY SPONSORED BY

THE BITTON FAMILY

LEILUY NISHMAT

OF THEIR DEAR FATHER
DAVID BEN MESSODA Z"L

& FOR HATZLACHAT AM YISRAEL.

HASHEM SHOULD BLESS THEM WITH
HEALTH, HAPPINESS, & LONG LIFE, AMEN.

The background of the entire image is a photograph of two lit candles in wooden holders, mounted on a stone wall. The candles are white with yellow flames, and the holders are dark wood. The stone wall is made of irregular, light-colored blocks.

We would like to Wholeheartedly Thank our Dear Friends,

Mr. & Mrs. Simon Benchimol

for generously Donating the TORAH LEARNING of

Iyar 5782

Leiluy Nishmat his Dear Mother

Rajel Bat Nina z"l

Tihye Nishmata Tzerura Bitzror Hahayim Amen!

We truly appreciate it. In this merit may Hashem Bless you &
your wonderful family with all the Berachot of the Torah. Amen.

We would like to Wholeheartedly Thank our Dear Friends,

Mr. & Mrs. Julien Ayache

for generously Donating the TORAH LEARNING of

Iyar 5782

Leiluy Nishmat his Dear Father

Moshi Ben Eliyahou Ayache z"l

Tihye Nishmato Tzerura Bitzror Hahayim Amen!

We truly appreciate it. In this merit may Hashem Bless you &
your wonderful family with all the Berachot of the Torah. Amen.

Happy Birthday To

- Noa Yakut Becker – Fri. May 13th,
- Mrs. Luna Benhayoun – Sun. May 15th,
- Mrs. Lilian Tapiero – Sun. May 15th,
- Devorah Benmergui – Mon. May 16th,
- Mrs. Nicole Bouhadana – Wed. May 18th,
- Ori Michael – Wed. May 18th,
- Mrs. Regina Allouche – Thurs. May 19th,
- Mr. Isaac Cohen – Thurs. May 19th,
- Mr. Netanel Yizhak Perez – Fri. May 20th,
- Dr. Ari Benmergui – Thurs. May 26th,
- Mr. Daniel Cohen – Fri. May 27th,
- Mrs. Silvia Cohen – Fri. May 27th,
- Mr. Joseph Maya – Fri. May 27th,

Happy Anniversary To

- Vidal & Raquel Benarroch May 27th

Nahalot

- Mercedes Nahon Bat Esther z"l the 14th of Iyar (Sister of Dr. Max & Mr. Isaac Nahon z"l)
- Rosa Sayegh Bat Mazal z"l the 15th of Iyar (Mother of Mr. Charles Sayegh)
- Tzivia Silvia Eisen Bat Berele z"l the 16th of Iyar (Mother of Mrs. Raquel Eisen Benoudiz)
- Moshi Ben Eliyahu Ayache z"l the 17th of Iyar (Father of Mr. Julien Ayache)
- Bernard Elazar Ben Shalom z"l the 18th of Iyar (Father of Mr. Yaacov Allouche)

Next Shabbatot:

- Bracha Bella Eisen Bat Leopoldo z"l the 22nd of Iyar (Grandmother of Mrs. Raquel Eisen Benoudiz)
- Touna Sayegh Bat Rosa z"l the 24th of Iyar (Sister of Mr. Charles Sayegh)
- Yosef Ben Yaich Ammar z"l the 29th of Iyar (Father of Mr. Raphael Ammar)

WEEKLY INSPIRATION**Turning Ourselves into Sapphire**

(Rabbi Eli Mansour from iTorah)

The Torah in Parashat Emor (23:15) introduces the Misva of Sefirat Ha'omer – to count each day for 49 days starting from the 16th of Nissan, the second day of Pesach. Of course, we are in the process of fulfilling this Misva during this time of year, between Pesach and Shabuot.

The Or Ha'haim (Rav Haim Ben-Attar, 1696-1743), in his discussion of this Misva, cites a teaching of the Zohar associating the seven weeks of the Omer period with the process of purification undergone by a woman after becoming a Nidda. Just as a woman requires a period of seven "clean days" in order to regain her status of purity, similarly, Beneh Yisrael similarly required a period of seven weeks to cleanse themselves in preparation for Matan Torah. Over the course of the centuries spent in Egypt, Beneh Yisrael were submerged in the decadent, pagan culture of the ancient Egyptians, and they became defiled. In order to be able to receive the Torah, they needed to

undergo a seven-week period of purification, corresponding to the seven-day period of purification undergone by a Nidda. The Or Ha'haim explains that Beneh Yisrael needed seven weeks, and not just seven days, because of the intensity of their defilement, and because they were being purified collectively as a nation, thus necessitating a much lengthier process than that required for the purification of a lone individual.

Developing this point further, the Or Ha'haim cites the Midrash's comment that the two stone tablets which Moshe was given at Mount Sinai were made from "Senaprinon" – "sapphire." The Or Ha'haim writes that just as G-d's commands were engraved upon the tablets, so are the words of Torah to be engraved upon our souls. But in order for this to happen, our souls must be pristine and glistening like sapphire. The Torah therefore commands, "U'sfartem Lachem" (literally, "You shall count for yourselves") – an allusion to sapphire ("U'sfartem"). The purpose of the seven-week Sefira period is for us to

cleanse our souls, to rid ourselves of our spiritual impurities so that our souls radiate and shine like "sapphire," such that we will be prepared to receive the Torah anew on the festival of Shabuot.

The Misva of Sefirat Ha'omer is assigned to each and every one of us – demonstrating that we are all capable of reaching this level, of becoming like "sapphire." No matter what we have done in the past, we have the ability during these weeks to cleanse ourselves and become pristine and beautiful – just as Beneh Yisrael cleansed themselves during these weeks from their state of impurity. Let us take advantage of the opportunity presented by this special period, and work to improve ourselves so that we shine as brightly as we can, and we arrive at Shabuot in a pristine state ready to accept the Torah.

Acquiring Torah

(Rabbi Eli Mansour)

The Misva of Sefirat Ha'omer requires us to count the days from the second day of Pesah until Shabuot, a period that spans seven weeks. Why does the Torah obligate us to count these forty-nine days?

The answer lies in the seemingly peculiar name given to the holiday celebrated at the culmination of this period – Shabuot. The word "Shabuot" means "weeks." The festival of Shabuot celebrates the most important event that ever occurred in world history since creation – our receiving the Torah at Mount Sinai. Is "weeks" really the most appropriate name for this holiday? Indeed, in our prayer services on Shabuot, we refer to the occasion with the title "Zeman Matan Toratenu" – "The Day our Torah was Given." The Torah, however, calls this day "Shabuot." Why?

The holidays on the Jewish calendar are not just commemorative. We do not simply celebrate events that occurred in the distant past. Rather, the spiritual forces generated by those events are reawakened each year when these occasions are observed. For example, on Pesah, we do not simply celebrate our ancestors' Exodus from Egypt some three millennia ago.

Rather, we are under the spiritual forces which allow us to break free from the constraints of our physical drives. On Sukkot, there is a special quality that allows us to experience the special joy of living in God's service. And on Shabuot, we once again accept upon ourselves the Torah as our ancestors did when they stood at Sinai. We do not simply commemorate the receiving of the Torah, we experience Matan Torah anew, and reaffirm our commitment to God's laws.

This explains the reason behind Sefirat Ha'omer. We can't just wake up one morning and accept the Torah. This requires a rigorous process of preparation. Just as a team can't play the World Series without first getting through the regular season, we cannot properly experience Shabuot without going through the period of Sefirat Ha'omer. Shabuot is so named because it can only be observed after the "weeks," after a period of preparation. It is the culmination of a seven-week process of growing and preparing ourselves to accept the Torah.

This also explains why we count upwards, rather than downwards. Usually, when we count in anticipation of an event, we count down the number of days of remaining. During Sefirat Ha'omer, however, we count upward, from one to forty-nine. This is because in this period we are building, developing ourselves and advancing one step at a time in preparation for Kabbalat Ha'Torah.

The Mishnayot in Pirkeh Abot (chapter 6) list the forty-eight "Kinyaneh Torah" – the means whereby one "acquires" Torah. "Acquiring" Torah is different from learning Torah. A housekeeper very likely knows every room, closet, cabinet and drawer of the mansion where she is employed – perhaps even better than her boss who lives there – but she is not the owner. A person can know Torah without "possessing" Torah, without it becoming part of his being and essence. The Mishnayot list for us the forty-eight ways in which we take possession of the Torah, making it part of our beings. These forty-eight "Kinyaneh Torah" correspond to the days of Sefirat Ha'omer. On each day during the Omer, we are to focus on the corresponding means of acquiring Torah, and then review all of them on the forty-ninth day, the final day before Shabuot. By devoting ourselves to these qualities, we

ensure that we come to Shabuot prepared to not just commit ourselves to the Torah, but to take possession of Torah, and make it our own.

Quite obviously, space does not allow us to go through all forty-eight "Kinyaneh Torah" in this context. But it is worth presenting a brief sample. The first quality is "Talmud" ("study"), which might seem obvious, but conveys a critical lesson: there are no shortcuts. Somebody who is serious about "acquiring" Torah must put in the time and effort diligently studying. It is not enough to read a few easy books and articles; he must rack his brain delving into the complexities and intricacies of Torah law. The second item on the Mishna's list is "Shemi'at Ha'ozen" – "listening with the ear" – which refers to comprehension. If we hear something in a Shiur that is not entirely clear to us, we have to ask the Rabbi for clarification. If we read a passage that we do not fully understand, we need to think it through patiently until it becomes clear. We must treat Torah classes the way we would treat somebody who came to inform us of the lotto numbers for that week – being attentive and ensuring to clearly understand every word.

Another item on the list is "Mi'ut Shena" – diminishing from sleep. One cannot hope to accomplish in Torah without diminishing from his relaxation time. A man who works all day has no choice but to either wake up early for a predawn Shiur, stay up late after work to learn, use his lunch break for learning, or all of the above. Likewise, the Mishna lists "Mi'ut Ta'anug" – diminishing from our physical pleasures. Acquiring Torah demands sacrificing comforts and pleasures, diligently exerting ourselves at the expense of worldly delights.

As mentioned, this is but a small sample of the forty-eight measures that must be taken to "acquire" the Torah. It is recommended that everybody study through this list in the final chapter of Pirkeh Abot. By taking the time during Sefirat Ha'omer to work on these qualities, we will be prepared to fully accept and commit ourselves to the Torah, to take full possession of it and make it an inherent part of our lives and our beings.

The Zohar Reveals the Blasphemer's Identity

(Rabbi Frand from Torah.org)

At the end of Parashat Emor, there is a very peculiar story of the son of a Jewish woman, whose father was an Egyptian, getting into a fight with another Jew. In the course of the argument, the son of the Jewish woman blasphemed (*Megadef*) the name of G-d and was brought before Moshe. The Torah says that the name of the mother of this blasphemer was Shlomit bat Divri from the Tribe of Dan. The man was put in jail until they would hear from the *Ribono shel Olam* what to do in such a case.

Who was this fellow, and why, when he got into a fight with this other Jew, did he curse the Almighty? We might expect him to curse the fellow he was fighting with, but why did he suddenly curse the *Shem HaShem*? What is going on here?

Rabbenu Bachaye and other commentaries as well (all based on the Zohar) explain that the history of this fellow goes all the way back to the days of Egyptian bondage. We are familiar with the Biblical personage of Datan (as in Datan and Aviram – troublemakers from way back). An Egyptian taskmaster entered Datan's tent early one morning to rouse him to get out of bed and go to work. This Egyptian laid eyes on Datan's sleeping wife. He pretends that he is her husband, and climbs into bed with her in the pitch-black tent. She became pregnant from that episode.

Datan returned to the tent and found the Egyptian in bed with his wife. The two got into a serious altercation and the Egyptian was about to kill Datan, because he didn't want anyone to find out what he did. The young Moshe passed by and saw what was happening. Moshe rescued Datan by killing the Egyptian. This is the famous incident in Chapter 2 of the Book of Shemot.

Chazal say that Moshe used the *Shem HaMeforash* (the Explicit Divine Name) to kill the Egyptian. Fast forward quite a few years, to the period of the Wilderness. This fellow who blasphemed the name of Hashem was the product of that early morning union between the Egyptian and Datan's wife. He knows he has an

Egyptian father, and he knows he has a Jewish mother. He meets another Jew. Who is this other Jew? The Zohar says that this other Jew is now married to Shlomit bat Divri – i.e., the present husband of this Blasphemer's mother!

This second husband tells Shlomit's son, "You know how your father (the Egyptian) died? Moshe cursed him with the *Shem HaShem*!" The son is astonished: "Moshe Rabbeinu killed my father with the Name of Hashem? I, then, am going to curse the Name of Hashem!"

That is how this incident transpired! That is the history behind the story of the Megadef! How does the Torah describe the resolution of this incident?

"Remove the blasphemer to the outside of the camp, and all those who heard shall lean their hands upon his head: The entire assembly shall stone him." [Vayikra 24:14] Then the Torah launches into what appears to be a superfluous discussion of *Halachot* that are not even relevant to the incident at hand. It says what to do with a person who blasphemes. Then it says if someone kills someone, he needs to be put to death; if someone kills someone's animal, he must pay monetary compensation. If a person wounds another person, he must pay compensation. This digression continues for several *pesukim* and then concludes with the words "*Ki ani Hashem Elokechem*" (for I, Hashem, am your G-d) [Vayikra 24:22].

Most of this is superfluous. It is not needed here, and we also know it already. All that we need to know here is what the punishment is for a person who blasphemes the name of *HaShem*. Why does the Torah need to repeat the laws of murder and of property damage and of wounding someone?

On top of that, what is the point of the final *pasuk*, "There shall be one law for you, it shall be for convert and native alike, for I, Hashem, am your G-d"? There are 36 times in the Torah where the Torah equates the *Ger* (convert) and the *Ezrach* (citizen). Every one of those times, the point is explicitly made because there was some reason to think that this rule would not apply in that specific instance. Why should there be any difference between native Jew and

convert in the matters mentioned in the prior five *pesukim* [Vayikra 24:17-21]?

The sefer *Mor U'Ketzia* suggests an interesting interpretation of what is happening here: After saying "When you curse My Name, you shall be put to death", the Torah wishes to establish that the Almighty is not only particular about His own honor. "I care about the honor and wellbeing of every Jew!" Therefore, when the Torah metes out the punishment of a person who blasphemes the name of *HaShem*, the *Ribono shel Olam* says "I want you to know that it is not just because I am G-d and you are merely human beings." No, the Torah needs to emphasize over here, once again, that human beings are also *Tzelem Elokim* (made in the Image of the *Ribono shel Olam*). "An attack on another human being is really an attack on Me."

Indeed, the Talmud states: Whoever slaps the cheek of a fellow man, it is as if he slapped the cheek of the *Shechina* [Bava Kama 90a]. Everyone is G-d-like. Therefore, if you kill someone, you need to pay for it with your life. If you hurt someone, you need to pay for it. If you even damage the property of someone, you need to pay for it. With the Almighty, the consideration is "*B'Zelem Elokim asa et haAdam*." [Bereshit 9:6] And "One who slaps the cheek of his fellow man is as if he slapped the *Shechina*."

Rav Moshe Feinstein, in his *sefer*, *Darash Moshe*, deals with the same question but has somewhat of a different take on the matter: The Torah says that a man is to death. Before taking such a harsh step, a person needs to carefully review the laws of what it means to be a human being. Before executing a Jew, a person needs to remind himself that life is precious. Taking a human life – which is necessary in some situations – needs to be done with the greatest *Koved Rosh* and the greatest seriousness. Under normal circumstances, if you kill someone, you should be put to death and if you hurt someone, you should be punished. If you even hurt his property, you should be punished. In the situation of blasphemy, this person needs to be killed, but minimizing the *Tzelem Elokim* of another person should never be taken lightly.

Rabbi Mordechai Kamenetsky cites a very interesting idea that echoes this thought:

Rav Yehoshua Leib Diskin was one of the first *Rabbanim* of the city of Brisk. He had a custom that before he would sit down to his meal Friday night, he would review all of Masechet Shabbat. Masechet Shabbat has 156 *blatt*! I am sure he did not need to take out a Gemara and turn all the pages. What did he do? He sat there and mentally reviewed page after page. He was about to begin Shabbat. There are innumerable laws with intricate detail. So, he *chazered* Masechet Shabbat each and every week before beginning his *Seudat Shabbat*.

One time, he was taking a little longer than usual (Perhaps he got stuck on a Tosfot or something). The *Rebbetzin* came into him and said, “*Rebbe*, the guests are hungry. They are sitting at the table. They are not reviewing Masechet Shabbat. Can’t you for once forgo your custom and not review the whole Masechta before starting the *Seuda*?”

He heard what his wife said and then started mumbling again. He told her, “If this is something I have always been doing and now you are asking me to stop — it becomes a *Shaylah* of *Nedarim* (vows). I need to review Masechet Nedarim now to see if I am allowed to suspend my *Minhag*!”

We see from this story that when someone is about to begin Shabbat, he needs to remind himself about the severity of the *halachot* of Shabbat, and when someone is about to cancel a *minhag*, he needs to remind himself about the severity of the laws of Nedarim. The Torah says here: You are going to take a human life; you need to remind yourself of the severity of any loss of human life or property. Human life should never be taken lightly!

Divine Justice and the Mysterious ‘Vav’

(Rabbi Frand)

Incidents with Job and King David Explain A Vav In Parashat Emor

This week’s parsha contains the *pasuk* “You shall guard My commandments and do them; I am Hashem. You shall not defile My Holy Name and I shall be sanctified among the Children of

Israel; I am Hashem Who sanctifies you.” [Vayikra 22:31-32]. There are several difficulties with these two *pesukim*.

First, it is unclear what the difference is between the imperative “You shall guard My commandments” (using the verb *u’shmartem*) and “do them” (using the verb *v’asitem*). Either verb alone should have been sufficient to convey this idea of keeping the commandments. Rashi notes this difficulty and interprets that the word *u’shmartem* refers to study of the commandments (from the word *Mishna*) and the word *v’asitem* refers to actually doing the commandments (from the word *ma’aseh*).

The Chatam Sofer writes that the expression *u’shmartem* is reminiscent of an expression used by Yaakov guarding the dreams of Yosef in his mind (*v’Aviv shamar et hadavar*). Yaakov put these visions into the back of his mind – waiting to see how they might unfold. Therefore, the Chatam Sofer interprets the word *u’shmartem* in terms of anticipation. The *pasuk* is teaching that it is not sufficient for a person merely to do the *mitzvot* but a person must be anxiously awaiting the opportunity to perform the *mitzvot*.

A friend, whose father was an old time Chossid from Europe, told me a story. My friend came to visit his father on the first night of *Succot*. It was pouring rain. His father was standing by the window looking up at the sky, almost on the verge of tears: When would it stop raining so he could fulfill the mitzvah of *Succah*? Other people take the approach that if it rains, we are exempted from *Succah*. They go into the *Succah* (the first night) make *Kiddush*, have the minimum required measure of bread, and that is it! This Jew had such a strong longing to perform *mitzvot* that he was simply depressed by the specter of not being able to fulfill this mitzvah of *Succah* on the first night of *Succot*. This, explains the Chatam Sofer, is the imperative of *u’shmartem mitzvotai* – to yearn and long for the opportunity to fulfill them.

A more problematic expression contained in the above quoted *pesukim* are the words “*v’lo s’chalelu et shem kodshi*” [You shall not defile My holy Name]. The *pasuk* begins with a connecting “*Vav haChibur*”, which links the two *pesukim*. The passage thus reads, “You shall guard My commandments and do them... AND not defile

My holy Name.” Without this joining Vav , we would certainly read them as two unrelated *pesukim*: The first *pasuk* tells us to keep the *mitzvot* and then the Torah introduces us to the serious sin of Desecrating the Name of G-d. Since the second *pasuk* begins with a Vav , we are clearly being taught that these *pesukim* are somehow related. What is that connection?

I saw a novel interpretation in the *sefer* Ner Uziel from Rav Uziel Milevsky, z”l. Rav Milevsky bases his insight on a comment of the Vilna Gaon on a Gemara in Baba Batra (16a). In the tragic story of Iyov, Iyov is introduced with the following description: “...that man was wholesome and upright; he feared G-d and shunned evil.” [Iyov 1:1]. As we know from the story, the Satan came before the Almighty and urged him to test Iyov, claiming that he would crack under pressure, revealing that he was not such a righteous person after all. The Almighty then visited upon Iyov that which has become a metaphor – the sufferings of Job. First, he lost his money, then he lost his family, then he became sick. In the end, Iyov did not rebel and he stayed true to the *Ribono shel Olam*. He passed the test.

However, in the course of these events, there was one occasion in which Iyov expressed (let us call it) his “dismay” at the Almighty for what happened to him. The Gemara wonders how this expression of dismay can be reconciled with Iyov’s complete righteousness. One answer the Gemara gives is that a person cannot be held responsible for things he says “in the time of his grief” (*ayn adam nitfas bish’as tzaaro*). When a person is in extreme pain, he is not always held accountable for everything that comes out of his mouth.

There is another Talmudic opinion there in which Rava states that Iyov “wanted to turn the plate upside down” (*l’hafoch ka’arah al peeha*). The Vilna Gaon gives an amazing analogy to explain this enigmatic metaphor. The Vilna Gaon says the situation can be compared to a king who had a trustworthy and loyal servant who never did anything wrong in his life. For whatever reason, one day the king decided “Off with his head” for no reason whatsoever. This servant was so devoted to the king that he said, “If the king executes me, it is going to be such a disgrace to the king. There has never been a servant more

loyal than I am. What will the people think about the king if he executes me? They will assume the king is cruel and capricious.” Therefore, he went over while the king was eating, took the king’s plate and threw it onto the king’s lap. Then everyone said, “We see the king is right. This person deserves to be executed. He is a disloyal servant who must have done this in the past as well. The king clearly knows what he is doing.”

In actuality, this act of apparent disrespect portrayed an amazing level of devotion on the part of the servant. Most people would say, “Let the people think the king is cruel and capricious! He is in fact wicked to be so unappreciative of all my service to him.” However, the honor of the king was so dear to this servant he made it seem like the king was righteous in killing him.

The Gaon explains the Talmudic expression “Iyov wanted to turn the plate upside down” in light of this analogy. Iyov knew he was a perfect *Tzadik*, as described in the opening *pasuk* of the Sefer. However, he saw all the tragedies that happened to him and he knew that these events were causing people to question G-d’s Justice. People were asking, “This is Torah and this is its reward?” This the meaning of “Iyov wanted to turn the plate upside down”. He uttered a complaint against the Almighty. Now people had something to hang their hats on to which they could attribute his downfall.

There is a similar Gemara in Sanhedrin 107a. “(King) David was on the verge of worshipping idolatry. Chushi haArki came to him and asked, ‘Do you want people to say that a king such as yourself worships idols?’ David’s response was ‘Should a king such as I have his son try to kill him?’”

David’s son Avsholom was trying to kill him. This was a tremendous *Chillul HaShem* [Desecration of G-d’s Name]. In one of the most dramatic scenes in all of *Tanach*, King David and his entire entourage fled Jerusalem because his son Avsholom was trying to kill him. People were saying “How could this happen to David King of Israel – he is a *Tzadik*, a pillar of the world!? How could a just G-d let this happen – that his own son rebels against him? How could this be? Is this Torah and this is its reward?”

The Talmud concludes with David's reason for attempting to worship idolatry: "Better let idols be worshipped than allow G-d's Name to be publicly desecrated." In a selfless act, David *HaMelech* said, "I am going to look like I am an idolater so people will understand why this tragedy is happening to me." This is exactly the same calculation made by Iyov. Both were quintessential servants of G-d. To a loyal and devoted servant, there is nothing more important than the reputation of his master. "Let me go down in history as an idolater or a blasphemer as long as it does not affect the Glory of the Almighty."

The Ner Uziel says that now we can understand the linkage of the two *pesukim* quoted above. "You shall guard my commandments and do them; I am Hashem". Every one of the commandments should be observed. Why? It is because sometimes others perceive us as big *Tzaddikim*. However, in our inner chambers, in the privacy of our own homes, when no one else is looking we do things we should not be doing – for which the *Ribono shel Olam* needs to punish us. No one knows that. Everyone thinks we are perfectly righteous, observing the entire Torah. When the Almighty punishes us for that which we did in private and we need to suffer, people will murmur, "This is Torah and this is its reward?"

Sometimes in fact, it is a case of "the righteous suffer", but other times suffering comes to those who do in fact deserve it. The Torah therefore urges us to keep the commandments – both publicly and privately. In order that (connective Vav) my Holy Name not be desecrated.

Not Only A Mitzvah, But Good Financial Advice as Well

(Rabbi Frand)

Parashat Emor contains the pasuk "When you reap the harvest of your land, you shall not completely remove the corners of your field as you reap and you shall not gather the gleanings of your harvest; for the poor and the proselyte shall you leave them, I am Hashem, your G-d." [Vayikra 23:22]

The halacha is that when a person harvests his field, he is bound by 3 positive Biblical commandments called Leket, Shikcha, and Peah. A person must leave over a corner of the field for the poor (Peah). Likewise, he leaves over for the poor gleanings (Leket) – individual stalks that have fallen during the harvest – as well as forgotten sheaves (Shikcha) left in the field mistakenly during the harvest. Throughout the harvest process, a person is required to have the poor and less fortunate in mind constantly.

The Sforno writes in our parsha "After the harvest and the ingathering of the bountiful crop, the Torah gives us a plan by which we may guard our wealth." Hashem guarantees us, in effect, "You take care of them (the poor and the proselytes) and I will take care of you." This is not only a mitzvah – to be a nice person and think of the less fortunate. According to the Sforno, it is "wise counsel" [an *aitza tova*] as well: Do you want to keep your money? Do you want to be successful? Give it away!

The Sforno uses the expression "the salt of money is its deficit" and refers to a Gemara [Ketubot 66b]:

It happened with Rabban Yochanan ben Zakkai that he was riding on a donkey, exiting Jerusalem, and his students were walking behind him. He saw a certain maiden who was gathering kernels of barley from between the excrement of animals belonging to Arabs (indicating how desperate she was for food). When she saw him, she covered herself with her hair and stood before him. She said to him, "My master, feed me!" He asked her, "My daughter, who are you?" She answered him, "I am the daughter of Nakdimon ben Guryon" (who the Gemara tells us in other places was a fantastically wealthy individual).

Rabban Yochanan ben Zakkai asked her, "My daughter where did the money of your father's house go?" She answered him, "My master, do they not say this proverb in Jerusalem, 'the salt of money is its deficit?' (melach mammon cheser)." [In ancient times, salt was a preservative. This is saying that one who wants to "salt his money away" should do so, by giving (some of) it away to the needy.] And others say (that the Baraisa reads) "The salt of money is kindness" (melach mammon chesed). [Rashi

explains that his daughter was tacitly admitting that Nakdiman ben Guryon did not give sufficient charity. Even though he in fact did give away large sums of money, the Talmud says that for his level of wealth, he did not give away as much as he should have.]

(Rabban Yochanan ben Zakkai then asked her) and where is the money of your father-in-law's house? She answered him, "This came and wiped out that" (Rashi: My father-in-law's money was commingled with my father's money. Thus, when my father lost his money, my father-in-law lost his as well.) She said to him, "My master, do you remember when you signed on my Ketubah?" He said to his students, "I remember when I signed on the Kesubah of this maiden, and I read in it that she brought a million dinars of gold from her father's house besides what was promised her by her father-in-law."

This is what Sforno means when he speaks of "melach mammon cheser". If one wants to keep his money, he should abandon it to the poor and to the proselyte. This is not only a mitzvah; it is good financial advice as well.

This speaks to a phenomenon that Rav Tzadok speaks about as well. Rav Tzadok explains that in spiritual matters, that which is appropriate to do is many times counter-intuitive. B'derech haTeva [by the laws of nature], if a person possesses money and wants to keep it, the person saves the money. It works that way according to the laws of nature. In Ruchniyut [spirituality], a different set of cause and effect laws are operative. In physical matters, we know how cause and effect works. However, in spiritual matters, that which seems to us to be counter-intuitive is literally the way things happen. From the perspective of spirituality, a person who wishes to keep his money should not save it. He should rather "give it away". From a financial perspective, based on Derech haTeva, this makes absolutely no sense. However, Rav Tzadok says, Ruchniyut works with a different set of cause and effect rules.

This is the Rabbinic teaching, "Tithe, in order that you become rich" (Aser, bishvil she'tisAsher.) Become wealthy by giving your money away! It sounds ridiculous, but it is only ridiculous according to the laws of nature. By the laws of spirituality, it is not at all ridiculous.

Rav Tzadok cites another example. The halacha is that when a whole city worships idols (Ir haNidachat), there is a positive Biblical command to wipe out the entire city – men, women, and children. Based on Derech haTeva, what kind of effect would carrying out this command have on those who fulfill it? What does wiping out an entire city do to a person? It is the ultimate act of cruelty. We would expect that such action would make its perpetrators vicious and callous individuals for the rest of their lives. The corrosive effect of such action would likely bring these individuals to kill innocent people as well.

However, contrary to our expectations, the Torah guarantees for those people who carry out the punishment of the Ir haNidachas: "And (Hashem) will grant you mercy and be merciful upon you." [Devarim 13:18] Based on Derech haTeva, would we expect the people to become more compassionate than they were previously? How could that be? The answer is that if you do something for the purpose of a mitzvah, the results will not operate within the laws of nature but with the (sometimes counter-intuitive) laws of spirituality.

I read the following incident involving Rav Yakov Galinsky, zt"l, a famous Maggid in Yerushalayim. After the communist revolution, he and some other Yeshiva students were sent to Siberia together with some baale batim (regular heads of households). When the communists took over, they nationalized all the money in the country. Many people lost their life's fortune when the government took over all the factories and businesses and then sent the former business owners to labor camps in Siberia.

Rav Yakov Galinsky says he was together with some other Yeshiva bochrim and some people who had lost their fortunes. At night after work, the bochrim would gather to daven and learn. Two formerly wealthy factory owners came over to them and told them "You know, we are jealous of you. You still have your faith. You still have your belief system. All we ever had was our money. Now we lost everything and we have nothing."

Then they said an amazing thing. "You know who we have complaints against that we lost everything? We have complaints against the

Ponnevezhe Rav and the Kovna Rav. What did they do wrong? We remember when we were wealthy before the communists took over. They came to us to collect money for their Yeshivas and we gave them money. They would tell us, "Listen, you are a wealthy person. The needs of the nation are great. Give us more." We did not give more. We have complaints against them that they were not more forceful with us. They should have put a gun to our heads and said, "Give us more." Had we given more, at least we would have that mitzvah. Now we have nothing. Instead of them putting a gun to our heads and taking our money, which would allow us to retain something (the mitzvah), now the communists put the gun to our heads and we have nothing.

This is the lesson. If a person wants to keep his money, give it away. "One never becomes poor from giving charity and no evil thing and no damage is caused because of charitable giving..." [Rambam Matanot Aniym 10:2]. The lesson with spirituality is that spirituality works with a different set of laws than material matters. What may seem to be counter-intuitive in a normal "way of the world" is many times different in a spiritual sense. If you want to keep your money, give it away.

Striving for Perfection

(Rabbi Zev Leff)

Seforno explains that even though there are blemishes that actually increase the strength and value of an animal, they nevertheless render the animal unfit for sacrifice. Throughout the Torah we find completion and wholeness taking precedence over quantity. Thus, a whole roll takes precedence over a much larger portion of a loaf of bread, in the recitation of hamotzi.

From this we learn that our avodah is measured not by quantity, but by how close it comes to perfection. Since Hashem is the ultimate perfection, our goal must be to also achieve the greatest measure of perfection possible for a human being, for we are exhorted to emulate Him and "to be complete with Hashem." Only by being as close to perfect as possible can we hope to have a relationship with Hashem.

The Kohen is Hashem's representative and the one most directly involved in His most exalted service. He must reflect shlemut, perfection, and therefore physical imperfections render a Kohen unfit for service in the Sanctuary.

The clearest sign of man's inherent imperfection is death. As the verse says (Tehillim 82:6): "I said you are angelic, sons of the most high are you all, but like men shall you die." Because man's mortality constitutes the greatest denial of his quest for perfection, the Kohen, who is to be the embodiment of perfection, is severely curtailed in his contact with dead bodies. Even ordinary Kohanim, who are permitted to defile themselves for their seven closest relatives, are only allowed to do so if the corpses are complete. Though the Torah permits the Kohen to relate to the spiritual imperfection of man under the extenuating circumstances of a relative's death, this is only if the body is complete, so at least some semblance of perfection still exists.

Chazal tell us (Berachot 5b) that whether one does more or less is insignificant. What one actually accomplishes in this world is in the hands of Hashem. The main consideration is that one direct and concentrate his heart towards heaven. What we can control is the intensity of our desire and purity of our effort in the quest for perfection.

R' Yitzchak said: "The Torah teaches us that when a person does a mitzvah, he should do so with a complete and happy heart. Had Reuven known that the Torah would record that he attempted to save Yosef from his brothers, he would have put him on his shoulders and run with him home. And if Aharon had known that the Torah would record that he would be happy when he met Moshe Rabbenu after [Moshe was chosen to be the Redeemer, he would have come with drums and cymbals. And if Boaz had known that the Megillah would record that he gave Ruth some parched grain to eat, he would have given her a royal banquet" (Yalkut Shimon Rut 604).

In each instance cited by the Midrash, there was doubt as to what the proper conduct really was. Reuven was unsure if saving Yosef was proper after the brothers judged him a threat to their existence. If Moshe questioned his own suitability to be the Redeemer, Aharon likewise

had the right to have reservations concerning his brother's appointment. And similarly, Boaz had grounds for doubts about the convert Ruth, not knowing her sincerity and character.

Hence, they acted without the complete and happy heart that could have made their mitzvot perfect, and this blemish was reflected in the outcome of their actions. Yosef was sold into slavery; the mission to Pharaoh met with initial failure (see Haamek Davar, Shemot 3:18); and David's lineage was impugned.

After Bnei Yisrael were freed from subjugation in Egypt to serve Hashem, the first step in that service was to strive for perfection. That striving took the form of counting seven complete weeks, forty-nine complete days, until the giving of the Torah on the fiftieth day.

Fifty represents perfection (fifty gates of wisdom, fifty gates of purity). Our task is to count forty-nine. We are not capable of creating perfection; only Hashem can make something perfect. All we can do is strive towards it. But by counting for forty-nine days, it is as if we counted the fiftieth also. For the fiftieth level is the automatic result of our efforts in securing the first forty-nine.

This is the significance of Lag Be'Omer as explained by the Maharsha (Moed Kattan 28a). The majority of the omer count is reached when two-thirds of the time passes. That occurs on the thirty-third day. Once most of the period has passed successfully, one can be confident he will be successful in likewise fulfilling the remainder. Lag Be'Omer is a day to rejoice in one's successful quest for perfection. The traditional bonfires symbolize the pure, intense fire of the heart that is the basis of our quest for perfection.

The Midrash comments: "When are the days of the omer perfect and complete? When we fulfill G-d's will" (Vayikra Rabbah 28:3). It is the intensity of our quest for perfection in performing G-d's will that infuses our counting of the omer with added meaning and effectiveness.

May we strive for perfection in all that we do, so that our efforts will be crowned by success by Hashem, Who will bring us to the ultimate perfection, "granting His nation strength and blessing it with peace."

FOOD FOR THOUGHT

A Lesson in Parenting

(Rabbi Eli Mansour)

The opening section of Parashat Emor discusses the special restrictions that apply to the Kohanim, specifically, restrictions on whom they may marry and when they may become Tameh (ritually impure). This section begins with God instructing Moshe, "Say to the Kohanim, the sons of Aharon, and say to them..." ("Emor El Ha'kohanim ... Ve'amarta Alehem"). There is an obvious redundancy in this verse, as God twice tells Moshe to convey to the Kohanim the information presented in this section. Once God instructed Moshe, "Say to the Kohanim," there was seemingly no need for Him to then reiterate, "and say to them."

Rashi explains that God here tells Moshe to convey this information to the Kohanim, and also to have them relay the information to their children. As Rashi writes, "Le'hazhir Ha'gedolim Al Ha'ketanim" – "to instruct the adults with regard to the children." Moshe was to "say to the Kohanim" these Halachot, and then "say to them" that these laws must be transmitted to their children.

Accordingly, this verse constitutes the Biblical source of the most important and most difficult Misva in the entire Torah – the Misva of Hinuch, educating children. Moshe was to tell the adult Kohanim to convey these laws to their children, and from here we derive the general obligation upon each and every Jewish parent to raise children according to the Torah tradition.

The obvious question arises, why did the Torah choose to introduce this most fundamental Misva specifically in this context? The section dealing with the Kohanim actually seems like the least apropos framework in which to establish the obligation of Hinuch, as it applies only to a small segment of the Jewish people. Why did Hashem deem this context the most appropriate place in

the Torah for introducing the Misva of educating children?

Every parent can identify with the difficult challenge of imposing upon their child restrictions by which other children are not bound. Inevitably, the child protests and asks, "So how come so-and-so is allowed to do that?" It is difficult to force a child to comply with special rules that other children do not have to comply with. Sometimes, though, we simply have no choice.

This, perhaps, is why the Torah chose the laws of the Kohanim as the paradigm of Hinuch. No group had a harder time educating their children than the Kohanim, who were bound by a special group of restrictions that did not apply to other children. If a child's friends are going on a trip that passes through a graveyard, he cannot join them. When he grows older and meets a divorced woman whom he wishes to marry, he must be told that he cannot marry her. Kohanim have no choice but to explain to their children that they are different, that they are special, that they have been chosen for a unique level of holiness and closeness to Hashem. This is the only way they can transmit the special laws of the priesthood to their children.

And this is the model that all parents must follow. We must explain to our children that they, and we, are bound by special rules and restrictions because we are special, we are different, we have been given the opportunity to build a unique, close bond with our Creator. This is why the section of the Kohanim was chosen as the source for the Misva of Hinuch. Just as the Kohanim must explain to their children that they are special and different, similarly, we must convey to our children the unique distinction for which Am Yisrael is chosen, and the great privilege we have been given to accept and follow God's Torah. The Kohanim offer us the model we must follow in this daunting but critical job of raising and educating our children. They demonstrate the importance of explaining to children the value and beauty of the lives of Kedusha for which we have been chosen, and which set us apart from other peoples.

Marriage Advice from Woman Married 67 Years

The unstoppable Leona Fallas has loads a marriage advice, some of it unconventional.

(By Sarah Pachter)

At 84, Leona Fallas has boundless positive energy, a winning smile and is about to celebrate her 67th wedding anniversary with her husband whom she met as a teen.

"We started dating when I was 18 and spent a lot of time at the Bradley Beach Resort. At the end of the summer I came home, and we were calling and writing. He wanted to possibly get engaged and continue a long-distance engagement.

"My aunt said, 'That's ridiculous, let them get married and go back together.' So my mother organized a wedding in only ten days' time, and we went back to Pittsburgh as a married couple!"

Eventually they moved back to Los Angeles and began to build a business together while simultaneously starting a family. "We stuck together and built a beautiful life."

With 67 years of experience under her belt, Leona has loads a marriage advice, some of it unconventional. Here are three pearls of wisdom.

Go to Bed Angry

Most people advise, "Never go to sleep angry. "Leona strongly disagrees.

"I find that it's all right if you go to bed angry. You don't have to make everything lovey dovey or smooth things over. If it's important, it will be there tomorrow."

She claims that going to bed angry is one of her secrets to maintaining a happy and long-lasting marriage.

"If it is that important, it can wait, and if not, it will disappear. Don't jump. Give your partner the benefit of the doubt. They love you, and you love them. Put on the brakes; don't jump. The first answer isn't always the best answer."

Commit Even When It's Hard

Marriage requires commitment. There are good times and bad, and one has to learn to navigate and go along for the ride.

"Many years ago, when I was young, I remember wanting to leave. I don't remember what exactly transpired, but I was upset in the relationship."

Leona chuckled to herself as she reminisced over this moment, and then continued, "I decided I wanted to head down to Palm Springs where we had a vacation condo, to get a break and think for myself. I even started driving down the highway."

"On the road, I began to think, '*What's the matter with you? Get yourself back on track! Turn around...*' And so, I came home..."

"My partner is a strong person who often takes the lead. This added a challenging dimension to our relationship at times but served him well in business."

Leona thinks that a lack of overall commitment today is weakening marriages. She finds that the younger generation is avoiding marriage altogether because of it. Leona urges young people to commit to marriage and stay together, despite inevitable challenges.

"Marriage is like an investment; it will eventually pay dividends. The investment needs to be protected. That means holding off from reacting at times and waiting to respond. Don't allow your anger to overtake the moment."

"You're not always on the same page, not always feeling good together, but hang in there and give the benefit of the doubt."

She further noted, "We all get tired and experience times when our mates won't be doing or saying the right thing, at the right time. Relax. You have a long-term investment here."

Count Your Blessings

Leona strongly believes in counting one's blessings to enhance a marriage. Despite the major health issues, she has had throughout her life, Leona has maintained a positive outlook. She also makes sure to recognize the positive in her spouse.

In fact, when I asked Leona what she felt her husband did to maintain a successful marriage, she said it was undoubtedly *his* positivity.

"My husband had a road map. There was an end goal that he wanted to reach and let nothing negative get in his way. I'm very proud of his

accomplishments. He sustained a synagogue and started a school [Gindi Maimonides]."

Leona sums up three keys to her successful marriage: go to bed angry, commit despite challenges, and count your blessings. Utilizing these will help couples reap the dividends of a successful investment – a long-lasting, happy marriage.

DAILY HALACHOT

Halachot of Sefirat Haomer

(Daily Halacha)

Is It Permissible for Sephardim To Take A Hair Cut on the 33rd Day Of The Omer When The 34th Day Falls Out On Shabbat?

We have explained in a previous daily Halacha (see the Halacha entitled "Lag BaOmer- Cutting Hair, Weddings, Music, and More"), that Sephardim do not take haircuts until the 34th day of the Omer. This is unlike the Ashkenazim who take haircuts from the 33rd day of the Omer. So, the question was asked about a case that is occurring this year 5765 (2005). Would it be permissible for a Sephardi to take a haircut on the 33rd day of the Omer if the 34th day of the Omer falls out on Shabbat?

Maran writes clearly in Shulchan Aruch that yes indeed, it is permissible for Sephardim to take a haircut on the 33rd day of the Omer when the 34th day of the Omer falls out on Shabbat. One would not have to wait until Sunday. For that matter, Chacham Ovadia Yoseph writes in Yichaave Da'at in Helek 4, siman 32 that it is permissible to get a haircut on Friday at any time. One does not have to wait until the afternoon. One can get a haircut in the morning if he wants. As a matter of fact, Chacham Ovadia Yoseph says a person can even get a haircut the night before (33rd of the Omer at night) if there is sufficient cause. For example, one can take a haircut the night before if he has a business appointment the next morning, or if he cannot get a haircut appointment during the day, or if he needs to attend a Simcha.

The question was asked about children and ladies and whether or not they may take haircuts during the Omer. Well, we discussed this before in Daily Halacha (see the Halacha entitled "Lag BaOmer- Cutting Hair, Weddings, Music, and More"), but let's just repeat them again today for the purposes of review. Ladies are allowed to take haircuts at any time during the Omer. As for children, they too may take haircuts at any time during the Omer. Only once the boy becomes Bar Mitzvah, he may not take haircuts until the 34th (for Sephardim). But girls and ladies of all ages are not bound by this rule, and they may take a haircut at any time during this period.

The question was also asked about beards. Is it permissible to shave a beard on the 34th day of the Omer? More specifically, would it be permissible to allow Sephardim this year to shave on the 33rd? Chacham Ben Tzion Aba Shaul in his recently published book 'Or L'Tzion 3' discussed the Minhag of the Kabbalists who do not take haircuts for the 49 days of the Omer. The Arizal (Rabbi Yitzchak Luria, otherwise known as The Ari) also says this, however Chacham Ben Tzion holds that this restriction only applies to hair and not to beards. Therefore, even if someone wants to follow the Arizal and the Kabbalists and refrain from taking a haircut throughout all 49 days, he may however shave on the 34th day (the 33rd this year).

KIDZ CORNER

INTERESTING MIDRASH

(from Torah Tots)

The Great Kehuna

While it only takes a good set of priestly genes to be a *Kohen*, qualifications for the position of *Kohen Gadol* (High Priest) are a little more complicated. The first *Kohen Gadol*, Aharon, was appointed by his brother, Moshe *Rabaynu* as per *Hashem's* command. Ever since then, it has been the job of the *Sanhedrin* (Jewish Supreme Court) to pick from the pool of available *Kohanim* and choose the best qualified one, once the former *Kohen Gadol* has died or left his position.

Basically, there are five qualities to look for in a candidate for the position of *Kohen Gadol*:

- Wisdom,
- Beauty,
- Strength,
- Wealth, and
- Years.

Wisdom.

Not just good old common sense. We're talking *Torah*. The *Kohen Gadol* must be versed through and through with *Torah* wisdom. There's a good reason for that too. When the *Kohen Gadol* performs the *Avodah* (service) in the *Bait Hamikdash*, he represents all of *Klal Yisrael* (the nation of Israel). He needs to have a perfect understanding of every ritual and what it means in order to fulfill his task.

Beauty.

The candidate for the "Great *Kahuna*" also has to be very handsome. I know what you're thinking, but how would you like it, if you had to show up to an important appointment and someone handed you a dusty old pair of jeans and a ripped tie-dye tee-shirt. Even if you bathed and brushed your hair, you'd still be embarrassed. The point is, we need to be proud of our leaders and when it comes to the *Kohen Gadol*, he needs to be cheered on by very enthusiastic crowds on *Yom Kippur* if we expect him to represent us with full *kavanah* (concentration). The *Torah* understands this and therefore urges us to "put our best face forward."

Strength.

The *Kohen Gadol* has to be strong. Not that Superman is in the running, but it does take strength to perform some of the more tiring tasks of a *Kohen Gadol*. For example, the *Kohen Gadol* has the distinct responsibility to welcome *Leviyim* into the fold with a shake - not just a hand shake, but an up-down-back-and-forth-in-the-air full body shake. Aharon, the first *Kohen Gadol* was first to perform "the *kahuna* shake." He lifted and shook 22,000 *Leviyim* in a single day (maybe he was Superman after all...)!

Wealth.

The *Kohen Gadol* must be richer than all the other *Kohanim*. That rule applies to Jewish kings

and Jewish leaders too. That way there's no chance that he will be bribed.

And, finally,

Years.

The *Kohen Gadol* must be mature. No youngsters need apply. That's because with age comes life experience and wisdom.

Now, one thing you need to know about these qualifications are, that they're more like guidelines. Actually, the only real solid criteria for the "*Great Kahuna*" is *Torah* wisdom. All the other qualifications can be modified or reached with a little creative accounting. For example, qualification number four, where the *Kohen Gadol's* got to be richer than all the other *Kohanim*...

Once there was a *Kohen* known as Pinchas the stone-cutter. He was nominated by the *Sanhedrin* to be the next *Kohen Gadol*. When the *Kohanim* went out to see him, they found him in a quarry cutting stones. Immediately, they showered him with barrels of coins until the entire quarry was filled. In this way, they qualified him to become *Kohen Gadol*.

But then there are the weak and ugly *Kohanim*. How could they ever qualify - you ask. The answer is in the oil. It is the job of the *Sanhedrin* to anoint the *Kohen Gadol* with oil. This oil has the power to make the ugly handsome and the weak strong. Did you know that after the future King David was anointed, he grew tall and muscular enough to fit into King Saul's armor?

As for age, the fact is that the *Sanhedrin* always gave first consideration to the former *Kohen Gadol's* son. That way there was a continuity in the line of the "*Great Kahuna*." Worried about the youth factor? The anointing oil could also add a little grey to the *Kohen Gadol's* beard, if that's what it took to be the "*Kohen HaGadol MeEchav*" - The *Kohen* who is greater than his brothers.

Kid'z Korner (Revach)

Rav Gedalia Schorr - Accidents Are Not By Accident!

In the second year in the Midbar, people came to Moshe Rabbeinu to complain that they were Tamei (Bahalotecha 9:7), "*V'Lama Nigara*", why should we lose out on bringing the Korban Pesach because of our Tumah? Moshe Rabbeinu asked Hashem, who taught him about Pesach Sheini. Rashi says that really Moshe should have known this before, but Hashem withheld this halacha since "*Migalgilin Zchut Al Yidei Zakkai*". These timei'im were zocheh that this halacha should come about through them.

Why did they have a right to complain? If they were Anusim (either they were Mishael and Elitzafan who were told to carry out Nadav and Avihu or they were the people who carried Yosef's Aron), they were Patur. Moreover they were Osek in another Mitzva and therefore patur from Pesach.

Rav Gedalia Schorr (Ohr Gedaliyahu) answers with story from the Zohar. Tanaim were coming back from performing the great mitzva of Pidyon Shevu'im when they met a child who said to them that he can see on their faces that they did not say Keriat Shema. They explained that they were Patur since they were Osek B'Mitzva. Despite this valid reason not to say Kriat Shema, points out Rav Schorr, their aura was noticeably diminished. Why? Because if Hashem wanted, He could have given them a way to do the mitzva without missing Keriat Shema. It was because of something they did wrong that Hashem caused them to miss the mitzva. It was this something that the child noticed in their diminished aura.

The Temei'im complained to Moshe that they did absolutely nothing wrong, so how could Hashem punish them by making them miss the Korban Pesach because of a different Mitzva that they did? To this Rashi explains that they were right and they were indeed Tzaddikim Gemurim. The reason why Hashem caused them to miss Pesach was a reward for their Tzidkus. He rewarded them by causing the mitzva of Korban Pesach to be told through them. Migalgilin Zchut Al Yidei Zakkai!

The lesson for Pesach Sheini is that good excuses may excuse you, but if you were more deserving you wouldn't need an excuse. Hashem is a master orchestrator and can make things perfect, if you are perfect.

6 Reasons Why We Rejoice On Lag BaOmer Rebbi Shimon Bar Yochai's Yahrtzeit But Fast On Moshe Rabbenu's Yahrtzeit

The Shulchan Aruch (OC 580:2) says that the day a Tzaddik was niftar is a fast day such as Adar 7 for Moshe Rabbenu. Yet Lag BaOmer, the yahrtzeit of Rebbi Shimon Bar Yochai is a day of happiness. What is the difference? The Sefer Ohr HaYikod Heim Yokdim gathered a list of reasons. Among them include,

1. Rebbi Shimon himself called it Yom Simchatenu. The Shach paskens (YD 344:9) that if someone requests not to mourn him on his yahrtzeit we listen to him. Rav Chaim Vital says that Rebbi Shimon appeared to the Arizal and complained of someone saying Nacheim on his yahrtzeit.

2. Moshe Rabbenu did not fulfill his desired mission of bringing Bnei Yisrael into Eretz Yisrael. Rebbi Shimon was very happy about the day of his petira.

3. When Moshe was taken 3,000 halachot were forgotten. When Rebbi Shimon was niftar many Sodot HaTorah were revealed in the Idra Zuta.

4. Lag BaOmer we celebrate that Rebbi Shimon eluded death at the hands of the emperor. It was only celebrated after his petira in order not to anger the Romans. The day of his petira was the appropriate day since had he been killed by the Romans he would not have been buried.

5. Death of a tzaddik causes a celebration in Shamayim and mourning on earth. When Rebbi Shimon was niftar the celebrations in Shamayim were revealed to the world who partook in the simcha.

6. Rebbi Shimon left behind a son worthy of filling his role. Moshe Rabbenu did not.

Bnei Yisaschar - Lag BaOmer the Magic Number

Rebbi Yochanan Ben Zakai asked his five talmidim to go find the "good way a person should attach himself to" (Avot 2:8-9). The answer Rebbi Yochanan Ben Zakai liked best came from Rebbi Elazar Ben Arach who said "Lev Tov". The Bnei Yisaschar explains that the talmidim were supposed to base their answer on

the Torah's first use of the word "Tov". Rebbi Elazar Ben Arach said Lev Tov because the first time the Torah mentions the word Tov is after thirty-two words, the numerical equivalent of Lev.

This answer found the most favor in the eyes of Rebbi Yochanan Ben Zakai because it was the most general and included all the other answers within it. The key is Lev Tov. Lev Tov says the Bnei Yisaschar is 49 in gematria. Working on your Lev Tov is the best way to prepare for Matan Torah.

Chazal tell us the word Tov refer to the Torah. Sefirat HaOmer can be divided into two parts the first part Lev, 32 days and the second part Tov, 17 days. Lag BaOmer the 33rd day is the first day and the earliest sign of the light of Torah emanating from Matan Torah. It is the first day of Tov. On Lag BaOmer, through the teachings of Rebbi Shimon Bar Yochai, the light of the Torah is revealed to us. It shines brighter each day leading up to the day we eagerly await, the day of Kabalat HaTorah.

PAR LA FRANCOPHONE

(Rav Itshak Nabet)

Avertir les grands

La paracha Emor se présente comme une des parachiottes les plus riches en Mitsvot, puisqu'elle nous en enseigne 63. La majorité de ces lois concerne les cohanim: avec qui ont-ils droit de se marier? Qu'est-ce qui est impropre à la céhouna?... Ensuite, la Torah nous indique les différentes fêtes qui marquent l'année juive. Enfin, nous trouvons l'histoire suivante: un homme de la tribu de Dan, fils de Chlomit bat Divri et de l'Egyptien que tua Moché Rabénou, se disputa avec un de ses voisins. Ce dernier lui interdit de planter sa tente avec la tribu de Dan. En effet, puisque le droit d'hériter d'une parcelle de terre d'Israël est donné en fonction du père, cet homme dont le père est non juif ne pouvait jouir de ce droit. Son voisin l'invita donc à planter sa tente avec les convertis, hors du camp de Dan. Les deux voisins se rendirent chez Moché Rabénou pour trancher ce litige. Moché

Rabénou donna raison au voisin, et expliqua au fils de Dvora bat Divri qu'il ne pouvait planter sa tente là-bas. Cet homme, furieux de cette décision, se mit à maudire Hachem.

Notre paracha s'ouvre sur le verset suivant: » Hachem dit à Moché de dire aux cohanim enfants d'Aaron: et dis leur de ne pas se rendre impur au contact d'un mort. » La guémara, dans Yébamot, s'interroge sur cette répétition. Pourquoi la Torah n'a-t-elle pas simplement demandé aux cohanim de ne pas se rendre impurs? Pourquoi répéta-t-elle » et dis leur »? Le Talmud répond: » Hachem dit à Moché de préconiser aux grands d'être vigilants pour leurs enfants. » En d'autres termes, les cohanim doivent dire à leurs enfants d'être vigilants pour veiller à ne pas devenir impurs.

Le Hatam Sofer zal s'interroge sur cet enseignement. Si la Torah demande aux adultes de surveiller les enfants, le Talmud aurait dû dire: » que les grands disent aux enfants d'être vigilants. » Pourquoi dire aux adultes d'être attentifs?

De plus, quel lien existe-t-il entre notre paracha et l'histoire de l'homme qui sortit du Beth Din de Moché et qui blasphéma?

Pour répondre à ces questions, intéressons-nous à un des épisodes du livre des Juges. Il y avait un homme qui se nommait Manoah et dont la femme était stérile. Un jour, cette femme vit un ange qui lui dit de ne plus boire de vin et de ne plus se rendre impure au contact d'un mort car Hachem allait leur donner un fils, qui devait être Nazir depuis la naissance. (Un nazir est un homme qui prend sur lui de se sanctifier et qui s'interdit de boire du vin et de ses dérivés, de se rendre impur et de se couper les cheveux...). Cette femme raconta sa vision à son mari. Celui-ci pria Hachem de leur envoyer encore une fois l'ange afin de leur expliquer que faire avec l'enfant. L'ange revint une seconde fois et dit: » Faites tout ce que j'ai dit à ta femme! Ne mangez pas de ce qui provient du raisin, ne buvez pas d'alcool. » Alors Manoah apporta des sacrifices pour remercier Hachem... Cet enfant s'appela Chimchon et fut un des juges qui régna en Israël.

Le rav Ouri Ezrakhi chlita nous rapporta la question suivante: » nous voyons que Manoah ne douta pas de la prophétie de sa femme. En

effet, il ne pria pas Hachem pour lui confirmer cette prophétie, mais pour savoir que faire de l'enfant. » Et pourtant, lors de la seconde apparition de l'ange, celui-ci ne rajouta rien à la première fois. Alors comment Manoah fut-il apaisé? Ce rav expliqua que lorsque Manoah entendit la prophétie de sa femme, il fut pris de panique: comment éduquer ce fils? Comment lui interdire de ne pas boire de vin, de ne pas aller au cimetière, d'être Nazir, alors que ses parents ne présentent pas cet exemple? Il pria donc Hachem pour lui demander comment éduquer cet enfant. Alors l'ange lui dit: « Faites tout ce que j'ai dit à ta femme. De même qu'il est interdit à ton fils de boire du vin, ne bois pas du vin. Ne mangez pas de raisin... » Manouah fut alors satisfait de la réponse de l'ange et sacrifia des offrandes à Hachem.

Le Hatam Sofer explique le début de notre paracha ainsi: » Hachem dit à Moché de prévenir les grands, d'être des exemples afin que leurs enfants suivent leur chemin et deviennent de bon cohanim. » La Torah nous prévient, dans notre paracha, que l'essentiel de l'éducation d'un enfant est entre les mains des parents. Il ne faut pas compter sur les professeurs ni sur les rabbins, ni sur personne... Chaque parent doit aider ses enfants à grandir dans le bon chemin et à se comporter correctement. Pour cela, le Talmud nous explique que nous devons être des exemples. Nous ne pouvons pas demander à nos enfants de parler poliment, d'étudier la Torah ou d'être Tzniout si nous ne le sommes pas! Comme disait le rav Wolbe zal: « l'éducation commence 20 ans avant la naissance de l'enfant. » Nous devons nous parfaire afin de devenir des modèles pour nos enfants.

Désormais, nous pouvons comprendre le lien avec la fin de notre paracha. La Torah ne nous dévoile pas le nom de cet homme qui maudit Hachem. Elle nous dit qu'il était l'enfant d'une femme: Chlomit bat Divri. Rachi zal explique qu'il n'existe pas de Divri dans la Torah. La Torah nomme cette femme Chlomit bat Divri car elle disait Chalom à tout le monde et elle discutait tout le temps (Divri vient de parler léDaber). Ainsi, cet enfant qui fauta et qui sortit du droit chemin était le fruit de cette mère qui ne s'occupa pas de lui!! Plutôt que de parler à son fils et de l'éduquer, elle passa son temps au téléphone ou devant la télévision. Pour autant, la

Torah ne rendit pas innocent cet homme qui fut puni de la plus sévère des façons. La Torah dévoila la source de ce mal et sonna le signal d'alarme: faites attention à vos enfants. Passez du temps avec eux afin de les aider à grandir. Alors retirons la leçon de cette paracha, et investissons- nous dans l'éducation de notre progéniture.

Et, surtout, essayons d'être des exemples, amen ken yéhi ratson.

Avertir les grands

La paracha Emor se présente comme une des parachiottes les plus riches en Mitsvot, puisqu'elle nous en enseigne 63. La majorité de ces lois concerne les cohanim: avec qui ont-ils droit de se marier? Qu'est-ce qui est improprie à la céhouana?... Ensuite, la Torah nous indique les différentes fêtes qui marquent l'année juive. Enfin, nous trouvons l'histoire suivante: un homme de la tribu de Dan, fils de Chlomit bat Divri et de l'Egyptien que tua Moché Rabénou, se disputa avec un de ses voisins. Ce dernier lui interdit de planter sa tente avec la tribu de Dan. En effet, puisque le droit d'hériter d'une parcelle de terre d'Israël est donné en fonction du père, cet homme dont le père est non juif ne pouvait jouir de ce droit. Son voisin l'invita donc à planter sa tente avec les convertis, hors du camp de Dan. Les deux voisins se rendirent chez Moché Rabénou pour trancher ce litige. Moché Rabénou donna raison au voisin, et expliqua au fils de Dvora bat Divri qu'il ne pouvait planter sa tente là-bas. Cet homme, furieux de cette décision, se mit à maudire Hachem.

Notre paracha s'ouvre sur le verset suivant: "*Hachem dit à Moché de dire aux cohanim enfants d'Aaron: et dis leur de ne pas se rendre impur au contact d'un mort.*" La guémara, dans Yébamot, s'interroge sur cette répétition. Pourquoi la Torah n'a-t-elle pas simplement demandé aux cohanim de ne pas se rendre impurs? Pourquoi répéta-t-elle "*et dis leur*"? Le Talmud répond: " Hachem dit à Moché de préconiser aux grands d'être vigilants pour leurs enfants." En d'autres termes, les cohanim doivent dire à leurs enfants d'être vigilants pour veiller à ne pas devenir impurs.

Le Hatam Sofer zal s'interroge sur cet enseignement. Si la Torah demande aux adultes de surveiller les enfants, le Talmud aurait dû dire: " que les grands disent aux enfants d'être vigilants." Pourquoi dire aux adultes d'être attentifs?

De plus, quel lien existe-t-il entre notre paracha et l'histoire de l'homme qui sortit du Beth Din de Moché et qui blasphéma?

Pour répondre à ces questions, intéressons-nous à un des épisodes du livre des Juges. Il y avait un homme qui se nommait Manoah et dont la femme était stérile. Un jour, cette femme vit un ange qui lui dit de ne plus boire de vin et de ne plus se rendre impure au contact d'un mort car Hachem allait leur donner un fils, qui devait être Nazir depuis la naissance. (Un nazir est un homme qui prend sur lui de se sanctifier et qui s'interdit de boire du vin et de ses dérivés, de se rendre impur et de se couper les cheveux...). Cette femme raconta sa vision à son mari. Celui-ci pria Hachem de leur envoyer encore une fois l'ange afin de leur expliquer que faire avec l'enfant. L'ange revint une seconde fois et dit: " Faites tout ce que j'ai dit à ta femme! Ne mangez pas de ce qui provient du raisin, ne buvez pas d'alcool." Alors Manoah apporta des sacrifices pour remercier Hachem... Cet enfant s'appela Chimchon et fut un des juges qui régna en Israël.

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(Rav Yonatan Gefen)

Nuestra porción en el Olam Habá

La porción de la Torá termina con la dolorosa historia del hijo de un hombre egipcio y una mujer judía, que cometió el grave pecado de blasfemia y, como resultado, fue severamente castigado. El episodio comienza con las palabras "el hijo de una mujer israelita **salió**, y era el hijo de un hombre egipcio, entre los hijos de Israel..." ⁽¹⁾.

Las fuentes rabínicas y los comentaristas señalan que el significado de la palabra "salió" no es claro; ¿de dónde salió? Rashi, citando el Midrash, explica que la Torá nos dice que "salió de su *Olam* (mundo)" ⁽²⁾. Los comentaristas explican que esto significa que, con el terrible pecado que cometió, resignó a su porción en el *Olam Habá*. El Taz, en su comentario a la Torá, enfatiza el uso del lenguaje "**su** mundo", en lugar de "**el** mundo". Dice: "La explicación parece ser que, desde el día de su nacimiento, todo miembro del pueblo judío está conectado al Mundo Superior (*Olam Habá*) en un lugar sagrado. Pero, cuando peca, deja ese lugar al cual estaba conectado, por lo que se dice que 'salió' ⁽³⁾.

Esta explicación nos da un importante entendimiento de la perspectiva de la Torá respecto al tema de 'recompensa y castigo' en el *Olam Habá*. Podría pensarse que, en este mundo, una persona no tiene una conexión intrínseca con el *Olam Habá*, mientras que, cuando muere y asciende, recibe premios por las mitzvot que hizo y pierde cosas por sus pecados. La recompensa del *Olam Habá* se considera su "premio", al igual que una persona recolecta su premio después de ganar una rifa. El Taz nos muestra que no es así, sino que, desde su nacimiento, un judío está intrínsecamente conectado al *Olam Habá*. ¿Cuál es la raíz de esta conexión? Obviamente, su alma. Al realizar mitzvot, alimenta su alma y, por lo tanto, mejora la naturaleza del *Olam Habá* al cual está conectado. Al pecar, daña su alma y, por ende, pierde ciertos elementos de su *Olam Habá*. Sin *teshuvá* (arrepentimiento), tiene que ir al Gueinom para limpiarse de las impurezas que el pecado generó en su alma ⁽⁴⁾. El pecado del

mekalel fue tan grande que perdió su *Olam Habá*. Así, vemos de aquí que la recompensa y el castigo en el mundo venidero no son arbitrarios, sino que una persona crea su propio *Olam Habá*, o la ausencia del mismo ⁽⁵⁾.

Hay una segunda enseñanza importante que puede aprenderse del Taz. Algunas religiones creen que las personas son intrínsecamente malvadas por el pecado de Adam, y que uno debe dejar atrás esa condición de mal inherente. Vemos del Taz que lo opuesto es verdad. Somos intrínsecamente buenos y sagrados; estamos conectados al *Olam Habá*. Nuestra tarea es no perder nuestra conexión inherente, cuidando así nuestra porción.

Esta idea es citada por la Mishná en Sanhedrín que declara: "Todo judío tiene una porción en el Mundo Venidero..." ⁽⁶⁾. Los comentaristas preguntan si es cierto que todo judío tiene *Olam Habá*. De hecho, ¡la Mishná continúa enumerando las personas que no tienen *Olam Habá*! La respuesta es que la Mishná no dice que toda persona termine recibiendo *Olam Haba*, sino que todos tienen una porción, y depende de ellos conservarla y desarrollarla. Si desatienden su tarea, corren riesgo de perderla, como fue el caso de las personas mencionadas en la Mishná.

Para entender mejor la Mishná, puede utilizarse una analogía sobre la posesión de tierra. La "porción" descrita aquí es como un lote de tierra: cada persona hereda un lote de tierra árida. Depende de ella cuidar el lote y plantar para producir granos saludables. Si, al final de su tenencia, el grano se desarrolló bien, puede cosechar la recompensa de su arduo trabajo. Sin embargo, si no atiende el grano, quedará subdesarrollado y, peor aún, si lo maltrata arrojándole, por ejemplo, peligrosos químicos, lo dañará. Al final de su tenencia, quedará con un lote inútil de tierra.

Entonces, todos nacemos con una elevada alma que es nuestra conexión con el *Olam Habá*. Si una persona observa la Torá y las mitzvot, elevará su alma para que ésta, después de la muerte, sea un recipiente adecuado para disfrutar las maravillas espirituales del *Olam Habá*. Pero, si desatiende y daña su alma, quedará tan mancillado que no podrá beneficiarse del *Olam Habá*, y esa alma deberá

atravesar el doloroso proceso del *Gueinom* para poder entrar al *Olam Habá* ⁽⁷⁾.

Vimos cómo cada judío tiene una conexión inherente al *Olam Habá* y cómo la forma en que nos conducimos en este mundo determinará la naturaleza de nuestra porción en el Mundo Venidero.

Hay una lección práctica muy importante que debería derivarse de este conocimiento. El *íétzer hará* (inclinación negativa) puede decirle a una persona que, incluso si actúa mal, Di-s perdonará fácilmente sus transgresiones y así evitará consecuencias negativas sin necesidad de hacer *teshuvá*. Sin embargo, este entendimiento es completamente incorrecto. Cuando una persona peca conscientemente, daña automáticamente su alma; no es cuestión de que Di-s lo perdone o no, sino que Di-s generó un sistema en el que las acciones de la persona tienen consecuencias espirituales naturales. Entonces, así como en el mundo físico se entiende que ciertas acciones generan un gran daño (como saltar desde un acantilado), lo mismo es cierto para el mundo espiritual. Sólo la *teshuvá* puede rectificar el daño hecho por el pecado ⁽⁸⁾.

Que todos ameritemos cuidar nuestra porción en el *Olam Habá* de la mejor manera posible.

Notas: (1) *Vaikrá*, 24:10. (2) Rashi, *Vaikrá*, 24:10, en nombre de *Vaikrá Rabá*, Emor, 32:3. (3) *Dibreí David*, citado en *Talelei Orot*, 24:10. (4) El tema de la naturaleza del *Gueinom* y su objetivo está más allá del alcance de este ensayo. Es suficiente con decir que la idea no judía del Infierno no tiene ningún parecido con la descripción de *Gueinom* de la Torá. En breve, a pesar de su naturaleza claramente incómoda, el *Gueinom* tiene la función benéfica de limpiar a una persona hasta el punto en que ya pueda entrar al *Olam Habá* y beneficiarse del mismo. (5) El *Etz Yosef* sobre el Midrash nota que es evidente que el *mekalel* no hizo *teshuvá* de su pecado, él aprende esto del hecho que el Midrash dice que perdió su *Olam Habá*. (6) *Sanhedrín*, *Pérek Jélek*, 90a. También es la Mishná que se encuentra en el comienzo de cada capítulo de *Pirkei Avot*. (7) El Jafetz Jaim usó una analogía muy similar para explicar la Mishná. Se encuentra en *Mishel Avot*, Volumen 1 p. 6. (8) Debería señalarse también que la *teshuvá* de quien peca con la intención de hacer *teshuvá* después del pecado no es aceptada. Es perdonado sólo si peca por debilidad y luego se arrepiente genuinamente de sus acciones.

Entendiendo el Omer

La parashá de esta semana resume las mitzvot relacionadas con la ofrenda del Omer. Di-s nos ordena llevar una ofrenda de cebada al Templo en el segundo día de Pesaj y contar cuarenta y

nueve días desde entonces hasta el día previo a Shavuot.

Rav Yosef Salant formula varias preguntas en su obra *Beer Yosef* sobre el Omer (1). Entre ellas, él nota que la ofrenda del Omer tenía el mismo volumen que otras ofrendas similares: un décimo de *efá* (2). Sin embargo, esta es la única ofrenda cuyo volumen es descrito con el nombre de Omer en lugar de decir simplemente “un décimo de *efá*”. ¿A qué se debe el cambio de nombre?

Segundo, Rav Salant cita al *Séfer Hajinuj* que dice que el propósito de *Sefirat HaOmer* (la Cuenta del Omer) es contar hacia el día de *Matán Torá* (la Entrega de la Torá), que es Shavuot. Contamos para mostrar nuestra excitación por llegar a este sagrado día (3). Rav Salant señala que, a partir de la explicación del *Séfer Hajinuj*, es difícil ver una conexión directa entre el Omer y *Matán Torá*, ya que pareciera que simplemente hay 49 días entre un evento y otro y que nosotros contamos los días que hay entre ambos. ¿Hay alguna conexión entre la ofrenda del Omer y Shavuot o efectivamente son dos instancias desconectadas?

Rav Salant responde la primera pregunta diciendo que la otra ocasión en que la Torá usa la palabra *omer* es cuando habla del Maná que recibieron los judíos en el desierto. La Torá declara en parashat Beshalaj que Di-s le ordenó al pueblo que recogiera del Maná “*un omer por persona*” (4). El Midrash también conecta la ofrenda del Omer con el Maná, diciendo que la ofrenda era una forma de agradecimiento del pueblo judío a Di-s por el Maná que recibieron en el desierto.

Luego continúa explicando que durante su estadía en el desierto, el pueblo no tuvo que realizar ningún esfuerzo para conseguir su sustento. El Maná caía directamente del cielo sin que la gente tuviera que realizar ningún esfuerzo. Es más, sin importar la cantidad de Maná que una persona tratara de recoger, nunca podía tomar más de lo que le correspondía; siempre recibía exactamente lo que necesitaba. Dado que no debía ocuparse de su sustento, el pueblo tenía libertad para involucrarse en el estudio de Torá y en el servicio Divino.

Sin embargo, cuando entraron a la tierra de Israel, el maná dejó de caer y tuvieron que

ganarse el sustento por medio del esfuerzo físico. Con este cambio vino un nuevo peligro: cuando una persona ve que su esfuerzo genera frutos, entonces existe el riesgo de que su confianza en Di-s se debilite y que le atribuya en cambio el éxito a su propio esfuerzo. Para que esto no pase, la Torá nos dio la ofrenda del Omer: le ofrendamos a Di-s el primer producto de la temporada, reconociendo que Él es la única fuente de nuestro sustento.

Al conectar el Omer con el Maná por medio de la misma medida de volumen, la Torá nos señala que en realidad no hay diferencia entre cómo conseguíamos nuestro alimento en el desierto y cómo lo conseguíamos una vez que entramos a Israel. Tal como Di-s era Quien nos proveía de alimento en el desierto, asimismo Él continuaba siendo la fuente de nuestro sustento una vez que el período milagroso había culminado. La única diferencia era que ya no ameritábamos ver milagros expuestos, por lo que nos veíamos obligados a realizar un determinado esfuerzo físico para conseguir nuestro sustento.

El *Beer Yosef* agrega una hermosa prueba sobre la conexión que hay entre el Maná y el Omer. Cita la Guemará en Kidushin que dice que el Maná dejó de caer cuando murió Moshé, pero que la gente continuó comiendo lo que había quedado hasta que entraron a la tierra de Israel el 16 de Nisán (5), ¡la misma fecha en la que llevamos la ofrenda del Omer! De esta forma, cada año comenzamos a contar el Omer el día en que el Maná dejó de ser nuestra fuente de sustento para enseñarnos que el sustento que representa el Omer es en realidad una continuación del sustento que personificaba el Maná.

Rav Salant continúa con la explicación de la conexión entre el Omer y Shavuot. Hasta este momento hemos visto cómo el Omer nos enseña que nuestro sustento viene de Di-s. Sin embargo, esa conciencia no es suficiente ya que también debemos darnos cuenta que ganarnos el sustento no es un fin en sí mismo, sino que es un medio para un objetivo más elevado: permitarnos tener paz mental para poder enfocarnos en nuestras actividades espirituales sin que la preocupación por nuestro sustento nos abrume. De esta forma, la Torá conecta la cuenta del Omer con Shavuot para enseñarnos

que el objetivo del sustento —simbolizado por el Omer— es llevarnos a *Matán Torá*, es decir, permitarnos estudiar y observar la Torá como corresponde.

Por lo tanto, contamos el Omer durante cuarenta y nueve días para tomar cada vez más conciencia de que Di-s es la única fuente de nuestro sustento, y que Su objetivo al sustentarnos es permitarnos acercarnos a Él por medio del estudio y la observancia de la Torá.

Las lecciones del Maná han tenido gran relevancia a lo largo de la historia judía. En la época del profeta Jeremías, el pueblo priorizaba el trabajo por sobre el estudio de Torá. Jeremías exhortó a la gente a convertir el estudio de Torá en su objetivo principal, pero le contestaron que necesitaban enfocarse completamente en su trabajo para poder sobrevivir ⁽⁶⁾. Jeremías respondió mostrándoles un contenedor de Maná que había sido almacenado en el Templo ⁽⁷⁾: les demostró que Di-s tiene muchas maneras para proveerle el sustento al hombre, por lo que debían darse cuenta de la futilidad de enfocarse en el sustento físico en perjuicio de su bienestar espiritual.

Ya no tenemos el Maná para despertarnos, pero seguimos teniendo la mitzvá de contar el Omer, el cual sigue siendo un recordatorio constante de que ir más allá de lo aceptable en el esfuerzo físico no sirve de nada, ya que Di-s es el único proveedor de nuestro sustento. Además, nos recuerda que el propósito de tener nuestras necesidades físicas cubiertas es poder enfocarnos en acercarnos a Hashem ⁽⁸⁾.

Esas lecciones se aplican de manera diferente a cada persona; no hay una cantidad de tiempo fija que uno deba pasar trabajando, estudiando o involucrándose en búsquedas espirituales. Sin embargo, durante el período de *Sefirat HaOmer*, vale la pena que toda persona invierta unos momentos para analizar el balance que hay entre su ocupación en temas materiales y espirituales. ¿Trabajas más de lo realmente necesario? En tu tiempo libre, ¿te enfocas en tu familia y en el estudio de Torá o llevas tu trabajo a casa? Haciendo estas preguntas uno podrá internalizar las lecciones del Omer.

Notas: (1) Parashat Emor pp.48-55. (2) Es una medida seca que contiene el volumen de 43,2 huevos de tamaño promedio

(Jumash Artscroll, Parashat Emor, p. 684). (3) Séfer Hajinuj, Mitzvá 306. (4) Parashat Beshalaj 16:16. (5) Kidushín 38a. (6) Un comentarista escribe que este incidente ocurrió en una época de hambruna. (7) Ver Parashat Beshalaj 16:32, en donde Moshé le instruye a Aharón que ponga este contenedor en el Tabernáculo como recordatorio del Maná para las generaciones futuras. Rashi cita este incidente en su comentario a este versículo. (8) En este sentido, el Rambam explica que todas las bendiciones físicas prometidas en el Shemá como recompensa a la observancia de la Torá no son la recompensa más grande. En realidad, Hashem nos recompensa brindándonos el sustento para que podamos enfocarnos en temas espirituales, porque la recompensa verdadera por respetar las mitzvot es la oportunidad de hacer más mitzvot.

NAHALOT

Hilula of Ribí Meir Baal Hanes Sunday the 14th of Iyar (Pesah Sheni)

Rabbi Meir Baal Haness, of the fourth generation of Tannaim, belonged to that group of men who developed Torah instruction after Bar Kochva's revolt. His teachers were Rabbi Akiva, Rabbi Ishmael, and Elisha ben Abuya, and his manner of instruction consisted of one-third Halachah, one-third Aggadah, and one-third Proverbs. All classes of people appreciated his lessons.

His lineage was not well known. According to the Aggadah, Rabbi Meir Baal Haness stemmed from a family of converts to Judaism, descendants even of Emperor Nero himself. They say that when Emperor Nero came to conquer Jerusalem, he shot divining arrows into the air and they all landed pointing in the direction of Jerusalem. Sensing that the event had been sealed and that he would only be an instrument of grief, he repented. From his descendants was born Rabbi Meir Baal Haness.

Rabbi Meir would say, "One should always teach his son a simple trade and pray to Hashem, Who is the source of all wealth. For wealth does not come by one's trade, since each trade has its rich and its poor."

He would also say, "There exist two types of friends: Those who rebuke you and those who do not. Love the first type above all."

And again, he would say, "Where do we learn that the resurrection of the dead is explicitly mentioned

in the Torah? It is written, 'And Moses will sing'. The verb is in the future."

We say that his father-in-law, Rabbi Hanania ben Teradion, was busy spreading Torah during that difficult time. The Romans ordered that he and his wife be burned. His daughter, the sister-in-law of Rabbi Meir, was sent to a brothel. Rabbi Meir's wife, Bruria, told him, "It is an insult that my sister is in such a state." Rabbi Meir took a sum of money with him and said, "If she has not sinned, may a ness [miracle] be done for her." He disguised himself as a Roman and asked to meet her.

"Get away from me," she told him, "I don't feel well." With this, Rabbi Meir understood that she was innocent. He presented himself to the guardian of the brothel and said, "Give me this one." He then gave him the money and said, "Half of it is for you. The rest is to help her leave." The guardian asked him, "And when the money is spent, what will I do?" Rabbi Meir told him that when this happens, he should say, "May the G-d of Rabbi Meir save me," and assured him that in so doing he would be saved.

"Let us test what you say," the guardian replied.

"Here are some vicious dogs," Rabbi Meir said. He then threw a stone at them and the dogs ran to attack him. He immediately said, "G-d of Rabbi Meir, help me," and the dogs calmed down. The guardian then agreed. Nevertheless, what the guardian did eventually became known, and he was ordered into prison. However, he uttered what Rabbi Meir had told him and was saved. Amazed at what happened to him, the guardian told people of his encounter with Rabbi Meir. Drawings of Rabbi Meir's likeness were affixed everywhere in the market, and one day someone eventually recognized him. When he saw him, he ran towards him. Rabbi Meir then spotted some non-kosher food and dipped one finger in it and put another finger in his mouth. The man who had recognized Rabbi Meir then thought that this could not be him.

He thereafter went into exile and died outside of the land of Israel. His bones were buried in Tiberius, the place where people still go to make a pilgrimage to his grave.

Rebbi Meir Baal HaNess said he would help those that gave to the poor of Israel, for the sake of his neshama (soul). **There is a custom that when something is lost, a person should give charity in the memory of the soul of Rebbe Meir Baal Haness in the merit of finding what was lost.**

The charity can be for any Torah worthy cause and can be minimal. Then, the following prayer is said 3 times in a row:

Rabbi Binyamin said: All are in the presumed status of blind people, until The Holy One, Blessed Be He, enlightens their eyes. From here {Bereshit 21:19} "And G-d opened her eyes, and she saw a well of water; and she went, and filled the bottle with water, and gave the lad drink." {The derivation being that the well was always there, but Hagar did not see it. Only after praying did Hashem open her eyes and she saw what was already there.} G-d of Meir, answer me. G-d of Meir, answer me. G-d of Meir, answer me. In the merit of the charity that I give to the ascending of the soul of Rabbi Meir Baal HaNes, may his merit protect us, may I find the lost article that I lost.

Hilula of R' Shimon Bar Yochai **Thursday the 18th of Iyar (Lag** **Baomer)**

Rabbi Shimon bar Yochai was one of the most remarkable men to have ever lived. Very few in number are those individuals whom his contemporaries, as well as his posterity, have held in such high esteem. In the era in which he lived, people would oftentimes say, "Happy are the days in which a man like Shimon bar Yochai can be found." And today there are still tens of thousands of Jews that journey to his tomb on the anniversary of his passing (Iyar 18, Lag BaOmer) to pray there.

Through his own efforts, this great man raised himself out of a position of the greatest hardship. In Jerusalem, it is said that Rabbi Akiva refused to admit Rabbi Shimon as one of his students, and that he only did so after making him take an exam. His father Yochai had been on the Roman side during the terrible time in which Emperor Hadrian had ordered the Jews persecuted (Pesachim 112a). This is probably the reason why Rabbi Akiva refused to take in the young Rabbi Shimon among his students. Yet, all the same, Rabbi Shimon managed to stand out among all the students and thus become (along with his companions Rabbi Jose, Rabbi Meir, Rabbi Yehudah, and Rabbi Nechemia) one of the pillars of Torah.

As opposed to his father, Rabbi Shimon was pursued by the Romans and condemned to death. The situation was so serious that he, along with his son Rabbi Eliezer, had to hide in a cave for 13

years where together they studied Torah incessantly. After the death of Emperor Hadrian, he was sent to Rome by his fellow Jews. There he succeeded in curing an imperial princess from a serious illness, at which time Emperor Antoninus suspended Hadrian's decrees.

Rabbi Shimon bar Yochai also attained importance in a domain other than the study of Talmud. He achieved a profound understanding of Kabbalah (Jewish mysticism), of which he became the main guide. When we say that he was the author of the holy Zohar, one should nevertheless not take this to mean that he himself wrote it, but rather that it was the Sages after him who did so. His son and his students received their understanding from him, so well in fact that the Zohar carries the imprint of his spirit. One day, one of his students went abroad to devote himself to business. Returning some time later with great wealth, his former fellow students saw him and were seized with a desire to become wealthy, and so they also wanted to give up on their studies and go off in search of riches. When Rabbi Shimon learned of this, he brought his students to a vast plane. There he prayed to G-d that He cover the entire area with gold, and it was so. "The one whose heart clings to gold," said their teacher, "should take what he wants. But know that the one who now takes of this gold loses his share in eternal life." No hands reached out to take the gold, and his students abandoned the idea of exchanging the precious good of the Torah for gold (Midrash Rabba Pekudei).

Nahala of The "Rama" zt"l **this Thursday the 18th of Iyar**

Rav Moshe Isserles (the Rema), on the Shulchan Aruch (1520-1572). Born and died in Cracow, Poland. He composed glosses on those paragraphs of the Shulchan Aruch in which he differs from the author, stating the Halacha as it has been decided by the Ashkenazi authorities, which is binding on Ashkenazi Jews. Rema named his glosses Mappah ("Tablecloth"), as a "cover" for the Shulchan Aruch ("the Set Table"). These glosses have been incorporated into the text and are distinguishable in that they are printed in Rashi script. This consolidation of the two works symbolizes the underlying unity of the Sephardi and Ashkenazi communities. It is thru this unification that the Shulchan Aruch became the

universally accepted Code of Law for the entire Jewish people. The Rema also wrote Darkei Moshe, a commentary on the Arba'ah Turim. He became a son-in-law of Rav Shalom Shachna, Rosh Yeshiva of Lublin. He was also related to Rav Meir Katzenelenbogen – the Maharam Padua – and to Rav Shlomo Luria – the Maharshal.

Lag B'Omer: Community or Individual?

(By the Shem Mishmuel)

Rabbi Akiva had twenty-four thousand students, and all of them died at the same time of the year [during the *omer*], because they failed to give honor to each other. (Yevamot 62b)

Although this Chazal does not tell us exactly when these students stopped dying, the later commentators fill in the details:

There are those who have their hair cut from Lag BaOmer onwards, since at this time they [the students of Rabbi Akiva] stopped dying. (Tur, Orach Chaim 493; see also Bet Yosef loc. cit.)

The difficulty with this is obvious. How could the greatest Torah scholars of the age fail in such a simple matter? What went wrong, bringing upon them such a terrible punishment? It is surely also significant that they died particularly at this time of year, rather than at any other. The nature of the *omer* period must in some way lend itself to their error and its punishment.

When a person shows respect and honor to another, this feeling springs from a recognition that his friend is superior to him in one way or another. There are so many facets to human nature that any individual will excel in at least one detail. This feeling will be reciprocated, so that in any society, such as that of Rabbi Akiva's disciples, each member will honor every other.

But this works only within certain constraints. Provided that the constituents of the group continue to view each other as distinct people, this mutual admiration functions correctly. But let us imagine that the members of this society become too close to each other, regarding themselves as mere parts of a whole, rather than as discrete entities, perhaps even as limbs of the same body. And just as in a body the left arm

doesn't praise the right arm for being stronger, so too, the members of this fraternity cease to honor each other, taking each constituent's special attributes for granted. We may suggest that this is the reason why the disciples of Rabbi Akiva failed to give honor to each other.

But surely unity is one of the great aims of Jewish life! What was wrong with achieving such a tremendous rapport with others? The answer is that by focusing so entirely on the community one loses sight of the fact that it is composed of individuals. Every *tzaddik* has his own role to play in the spiritual development of the world, one which is very precious and not attainable by anyone else. Failing to include this in one's view of life has disastrous consequences for Jewish survival. While we must concentrate on the development of communal unity, it must never be at the expense of the individual's worth. For people on the tremendous spiritual level of the disciples of Rabbi Akiva, this was a grievous error, so much so that they were smitten as a result.

My holy father added the following insight to our understanding of this matter: The period of the *omer* is during the months of Nissan, Iyar, and Sivan. The zodiac sign of Nissan is the lamb. Sheep bleat as one and stick together. This indicates that Nissan is a month of focusing on the *klal*, the community as a whole. In this month, the whole community was redeemed from Egypt, regardless of individual worth. Iyar has the sign of the bull, a more solitary animal, representing a complete change of focus to the worth of the individual. Sivan, however, is represented by the twins. This indicates the most ideal form of Divine service, blending the two opposite foci of the previous months.

It is crucial to note that the Torah was given in Sivan. Chazal tell us that when Yisrael reached Mount Sinai:

Yisrael camped there (Shemot 19:2) - when they came to Mount Sinai they formed a homogeneous group. At that moment, G-d said that "the time has arrived to give My children the Torah." (Echah Rabbah, Petichah 20)

This leads us to the view that unity is the only prerequisite for receiving the Torah. But the above excerpt is complemented by the following:

Rabbi Shimon bar Yochai said, "If Yisrael had been lacking even one person, the Divine Presence would not have been revealed to them." (Devarim Rabbah 7:8)

While G-d required unity for the most monumental revelation in the history of the world, this was never at the sacrifice of the need for individual existence and expression.

It is clear why misfortune befell Rabbi Akiva's students during the period of the *omer*. They had lost sight of the aim of Jewish life - to focus on both the community and the individual. It was during the *omer*, when this ideal is most potently felt, that their deficiencies were most strongly highlighted. They completely failed to learn from the nature of the Divine service expected of them during this period; hence their punishment was exacted at that time. G-d deals particularly stringently with His dear ones.

It is not insignificant that the plague terminated on Lag BaOmer. Just as the night is divided into three sections, the last of which is associated with the coming dawn, so too, the last third of the *omer* period, from after Lag BaOmer onwards, is associated with Shavuot. It is as if the proper appreciation of community and individual radiates from Sivan into the last part of the *omer*. Let us hope that we understand the importance of the error of Rabbi Akiva's students and make our *sefirat ha'omer* a happy synthesis of communal unity and personal growth.

Hilula of Rav Ezra Attias **Friday the 19th of Iyar**

Rav Ezra Attia of Syria, Rosh Yeshiva of Porat Yosef, Yerushalayim from 1925 to 1970 (1885-1970). He was born in Aleppo, Syria in 1887, and was named after the prophet Ezra because his mother Leah had had several miscarriages before his birth and gave birth to him after praying at Ezra's grave in Tedef, Syria. Rav Attia began his studies in Aleppo under Rav Yehuda Aslan Attia (possibly a distant relative), but he soon moved with his family moved to Yerushalayim. After his father died when Rav Attiah was 20, three leading Sephardic sages took upon themselves to support him so he could continue his studies. In 1907, Rav Attia began studying in the new Yeshivat Ohel Moed (which later became Porat Yosef) under Rav Raphael Shlomo Laniado and Rav Yosef Yedid. His studies were interrupted by World

War I, and he fled to Egypt to avoid being drafted into the Ottoman Army. While there, he established Yeshivat Keter Torah in Cairo, which continued to exist until 1948. Returning to Eretz Yisrael, Rav Attia was appointed to head Yeshivat Porat Yosef and also to serve on the Sephardic Bet Din. He continued to head Porat Yosef until his death, and among his students were Rav Ovadiah Yosef, Rav Ben Zion Abba Shaul, and leading rabbis of the Syrian communities in the United States and Panama.

What Are We Celebrating on Lag B'Omer?

(Rabbi Frand)

The Ramoh writes in Shulchan Aruch regarding Lag B'Omer that we increase somewhat our joy on this day and we do not recite thereupon Tachanun. There are many reasons given for why Lag B'Omer is a cause for rejoicing. Rav Chaim Vital, a disciple of the Ari z"l, writes in the Shaar HaKavonos that Rav Shimon Bar Yochai said that one should make a simcha out of the day of Lag B'Omer. That is why thousands and thousands of people go to the gravesite of Rav. Shimon Bar Yochai in Meron on this date. Ostensibly, it is supposed to be the day of his Yartzeit (even though the Chida says this is not the case).

The more conventionally accepted reason why we make a minor Yom Tov out of Lag B'Omer (cited by the Meiri in Tractate Yevamos) is that this is the day the students of Rabbi Akiva stopped dying. This is very strange. When do we ever make a Yom Tov out of the fact that people stopped dying? It is the equivalent, Rav Asher Weiss writes, of a person who has seven sons. They die one after the other until all seven are dead. Would anybody think of making a Yom Tov because now his sons stopped dying? Rabbi Akiva had 24,000 students who all died. They stopped dying on Lag B'Omer. Under these circumstances, is it appropriate to set up a day of rejoicing on the day of Lag B'Omer?

The Rema m'Pano (R. Menahem Azariah da Fano [1548-1620]) writes a novel idea: Really Rabbi Akiva himself was supposed to die. There was a decree from heaven — for whatever reason — that this great teacher of Israel would be taken from the nation at this time. The Ribono shel Olam did Klal Yisrael a tremendous favor and instead of taking Rabbi Akiva, took the equivalent thereof — 24,000 of his students! In this way, Rabbi Akiva was preserved. This gives us a bit of an insight into why Lag B'Omer is a Yom Tov. We can now better understand the context of

the death of Rabbi Akiva's students. They were ransom, so to speak, for their teacher.

The Chida says further: After Rabbi Akiva lost the 24,000 students, he moved south and took five students (Rav Meir, Rav Yehuda, Rav Yossi, Rav Shimon, and Rav Elazar ben Shamua). They became the established Torah leaders of the subsequent generation. If any of us, Heaven forbid, would suffer anywhere near the tragedy Rabbi Akiva suffered, we would no doubt throw up our hands in futility and bury ourselves in a hole somewhere and never again seek out the light of day. Rabbi Akiva had the fortitude to go ahead and restart his entire Torah teaching enterprise. Indeed, there is almost not a single daf (page) of Gemara in the entire Talmud that does not mention at least one of these five disciples of Rabbi Akiva.

Now, it all makes sense. The fact that the students died was an atonement for Rabbi Akiva. In lieu of those 24,000 students, Rabbi Akiva himself survived. Rabbi Akiva saved the Talmud. He saved Klal Yisrael. This speaks to the greatness of Rabbi Akiva, to have undergone such a terrible personal tragedy and yet to persevere.

Now we understand what Rav Shimon ben Yochai meant. Rav Shimon ben Yochai is the author of the statement "Heaven forbid that Torah should be forgotten from Israel for it states 'It shall not be forgotten from the mouth of his descendants.' [Devarim 31:21]" [Shabbat 138b]. Perhaps this is what Rav Chaim Vital means to say in the name of Rav Shimon bar Yochai. The reason Rav Shimon bar Yochai said to make a Yom Tov on Lag B'Omer was because on Lag B'Omer, when the students stopped dying and Rabbi Akiva was saved, Rabbi Akiva ensured the continuation of Talmud and learning amongst the Jewish people.

For this alone, it is worthy to make a celebration, a holiday called Lag B'Omer. This speaks to the hidden ways of the Almighty. Why did the students need to die? Why was Rabbi Akiva himself deserving of death? We will never know these things. However, we can derive from this episode the greatness of Rabbi Akiva — not only in his learning but in his personal perseverance and resilience.