

DIVREI TORAH FROM INTERNET  
ON PARSHAS EMOR - 5756

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""Yeshivat Har Etzion" <[yhe@jerl.co.il](mailto:yhe@jerl.co.il)>"" " Gemara methodology shiur... Sefirat ha-Omer

TALMUDIC METHODOLOGY

by Rav Moshe Taragin

Sefirat ha-Omer and the Shita of the Behag

[Note: This article is a summary of the Rav's zt"l Torah as it appears in Rav Herschel Shachter's sefer entitled "Eretz HaZvi." In addition, a synopsis of the article appeared in the Torah journal Messorah (published by the OU), vol. 3, Nisan 5750. Any discrepancies are purely my mistake.]

Our minhag during sefirat ha-omer is to recite a berakha only if counting at night. If one forgets to count, the count is performed during the course of the next day - but without a berakha. What is the source of this halakha? The mishna in Megilla (20b) contains two lists - one of mitzvot which have to be performed during the day and one of mitzvot to be performed at night. Though the second list is considerably shorter, it does contain the mitzva of KETZIRAT ha-omer - cutting the grain to be used for the omer sacrifice. The gemara in Megilla and in Menachot applies this time restriction to the counting of the omer as well. From this Rabeinu Tam (Tosafot 20b) extrapolates that if sefirat ha-omer is not performed during the night no berakha is recited. Tosafot, after quoting Rabeinu Tam, cite the related position of the Behag. He, too, maintains that no berakha is recited if one counts during the day. The Behag does, however, recognize this counting to be of some value. One who entirely forgets to count a day may not count the remainder of the omer with a berakha. If, however, he neglected to count during the night but counted during the day, he has maintained his ability to continue counting with a berakha. It is this position, then, which serves as the source of our minhag. Regarding this position, the question which immediately presents itself is as follows: If counting during the day is not considered a mitzva (as indicated by the lack of berakha), why does it preserve one's ability to continue counting with a berakha on upcoming nights? How are we to justify this split in light of the overall shita of the

Behag? Of course, our initial step is to arrive at some understanding of this shita, particularly why one who ENTIRELY omits a day may not continue counting with a berakha.

The Chinukh (mitzva 306) cites the Behag and explains: "de-kula mitzva achat hi" - it is all considered one mitzva. According to this view, the Behag defined all 49 days of counting as a single mitzva. Ample precedent for this type of definition exists; we notice other areas in which multiple mitzvot are actually defined as one extended mitzva. The most classic example, of course, is the mitzva of arba minim (the four species taken on Sukkot), which, though including four different components, is classified as one mitzva. One who does not include hadassim (myrtle branches) within his bundle has not fulfilled any part of the mitzva; complete integration exists. Similarly, the Chinukh suggests, according to the Behag, all 49 acts of counting comprise one lengthy mitzva. One who omits the 23rd part of that integrated whole, for example, cannot continue, for he cannot possibly perform the mitzva in its entirety.

Some hesitation must be raised with this position in light of the gemara in Menachot (42b) which offers a formula for reciting berakhot during the performance of mitzvot. The gemara asserts that "kol mitzva she-assiyata hi gemar mitzvata" - any mitzva act which represents the conclusion of that mitzva, such as mila (circumcision, which is completed during the performance) - requires a berakha. In contrast, on any act of mitzva which doesn't mark the conclusion of the mitzva - such as the manufacture of tefillin (the conclusion is delayed until the actual donning of the tefillin - we do not recite a berakha. According to the Chinukh's view of the Behag, if the single mitzva is not completed until day 49, no berakha should be recited until that point.

In truth, though, we may reconcile the gemara with the Behag. Making tefillin is disqualifed from a berakha not merely because the mitzva has not yet been completed but because, effectively, it hasn't really begun. The manufacture of tefillin can only be considered a "hekhsher mitzva," the preparatory phase of the mitzva. By contrast, each day of counting is a FRACTION or an INSTALLMENT toward fulfilling the large integrated mitzva. Quite possibly, performing this installment would warrant reciting a berakha. (NOTE: This answer did not appear in either article and is the personal suggestion of the author.)

It is more difficult, however, to discover the inner logic of the Behag's position. If, indeed, all 49 installments are connected why does a daytime counting maintain this integrity? If one doesn't recite a berakha over such counting it should be considered that he missed the counting entirely!!! The Rav zt"l suggested an alternate explanation for the Behag's position. Like the Chinukh's view this position bases the Behag's shita upon some form of integration between the various days of the omer. However, the integration exists not at the level of "MITZVA" but at the level of "COUNTING". Even if we were to regard the mitzvot as 49 independent ones, the mitzva is still defined by a COUNTING OF NUMBERS. Any counting deals with a numeric series which, by its nature, must exhibit some form of regularity. For example, one who counts 2, 4, 6, 8, 12, 14, 16, 18... has violated the integrity of his list because he omitted 10. The series, in this instance, is undermined. Similarly, one who counts omer but omits day 23 cannot continue counting since his numeric series has been compromised. The number 24 loses its significance and is considered "OUT OF CONTEXT" if it doesn't follow day 23.

It follows from this description that each of the 49 mitzvot do not necessarily have to be fulfilled in order for the numeric series to be maintained. As long as each particular day was counted, the integrity of the series is preserved. Even if the day was counted outside the context of the mitzva, the sequence can be maintained. The Rav zt"l noted two such examples. The first concerns retroactive counting. The position of Rabeinu Hai Gaon (quoted in several Geonic works) maintains that if a day was entirely omitted, on the ensuing day one should state "Last night was 23 and tonight is 24." Clearly, in this context, counting le-mafrei'a (retroactively) is not considered a fulfillment of the mitzva. The mitzva of the 23rd day has not been fulfilled.

However, the day of 23 has been counted and has been addressed, and hence the count may continue. A converse situation would entail, not retroactive counting, but prospective. The Machzor Vitri (a student of Rashi who wrote a book of halakhot surrounding tefilla) cites the following

halakha. What happens if one davens ma'ariv with a minyan prior to the onset of evening (as is common in many shuls in the summer)? Ideally, the counting of the omer should be delayed until nightfall. Practically, however, the danger arises that, having davened ma'ariv already, the person will forget to count at night. The following suggestion is raised: Count during the day without a berakha and stipulate that if you forget to count at night this "early counting" should be considered the counting for that day. If you remember at night you may count again with a berakha. Clearly, counting BEFORE the day has arrived does not fulfill that day's mitzva. This is confirmed by the ability, if one remembers, to re-count at night with a berakha. If so, how can this type of counting allow future counting with a berakha when a complete omission entirely disrupts the count? The Rav zt"l suggested that in this instance as well, although the mitzva of the day isn't fulfilled by counting before the day arrives, the number itself has been "factored into the series" and the numeric sequence has been maintained. Given this background, we may return to explain the position of the Behag. Indeed, according to Behag, one who counts during the day does not fulfill the mitzva of that day. However he HAS counted that day and the numeric series is continuous.

The Rav suggested another permutation for this possibility of not fulfilling the mitzva but preserving the series by counting the actual day. The Minchat Chinukh suggests that according to the Behag, a minor who becomes bar mitzva during the omer, even if he counted prior to his bar mitzva, does not continue counting. Since he didn't fulfill all 49 installments of the mitzva (those before his bar mitzva) there is no sense in continuing counting after the bar mitzva. Evidently, he interpreted the Behag as did the Chinukh. Since they are all one mitzva, one who doesn't perform all of them cannot perform any of them. Given the alternate understanding of the Behag - that they are separate mitzvot but one numeric series - one might arrive at a different conclusion within the Behag. This katan, though he didn't fulfill all the mitzvot, has counted the entire series. Although his pre-bar mitzva counting was not considered a fulfillment of the mitzva it still maintains the integrity of the series. This understanding would permit the minor to continue counting.

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"Mordecai Kornfeld <kornfeld@netmedia.co.il>"" Intriguing glimpses into the

Parashat Emor 5756 - "Shabbat around the globe"

The Weekly Internet

P \* A \* R \* A \* S \* H \* A - P \* A \* G \* E

by Mordecai Kornfeld kornfeld@jer1.co.il

This week's issue has been produced thanks to the generous support of Mr. Avrom Reichman, of Flushing N.Y. May the support of Torah bring you and your family much happiness and Nachas, always!

Disclaimer: what is mentioned in this essay is not to be mistaken for an halachic opinion -- I am simply bringing to your attention a fascinating halachic discussion. When making halachic decisions in real-life situations, one must *\*always\** ask a competent orthodox rabbi.

#### SHABBAT AROUND THE GLOBE

Six days work may be done but the seventh day is Shabbat, a holy time, during which you shall not work. It is to be a day of Shabbat unto Hashem in all of your settlements. (Vayikra 23:3)

In this week's Parasha, the verse specifies that Shabbat is to be kept in *\*every\** Jewish settlement. An obvious question presents itself here. Why must the Torah tell us that Shabbat should be kept in *\*all\** Jewish settlements? *\*All\** of the laws of the Torah (which do not involve agriculture or agricultural products) must be kept by Jews anywhere (Kiddushin 37a)! Why would I think that Shabbat observance would be confined to a specific region? The Gemara addresses this issue and derives halachic minutiae from this seemingly extra phrase (see Kiddushin 37b; Tosafot Yevamot 6b, s.v. Moshavot). However, an interesting approach to the simple meaning of this verse is suggested by Rav Ovadyah Sforno (15th cent. Spain).

Adam, the first human being, observed the first Shabbat wherever he

happened to be. His Shabbat began when the sun set in his vicinity. Yet at that very moment, elsewhere around the globe, it could have been morning or any other time of day, depending upon the longitude. While for him the sun was setting, at Adam's antipode day was breaking. If so, one might suppose that Shabbat should begin at different times of the day in different parts of the world. This, says the Sforno, is why the Torah wrote the phrase, "in all of your settlements." The Torah is informing us that in every Jewish settlement, on every part of the globe, Shabbat should be one full day and it should begin at sunset, local time. (NOTE: Halachically, the day is defined as beginning and ending at sunset.)

#### II

The observation that different longitudes and latitudes experience daytime differently well predates the medieval period. It is even mentioned by the Midrash HaZohar in passing (Vayikra 10b). Nevertheless, the relevance of this to Shabbat observance is not discussed until the time of the Rishonim [= scholars of 11th - 15th cent.]. Many of the Rishonim discuss the Sforno's question -- why should Shabbat not begin at the same instant all over the world? Since the most important place on earth, as far as the observance of the Torah is concerned, is the land of Israel, perhaps Shabbat should begin worldwide at the same moment that it begins in Israel. That would mean that in America it would begin up to ten hours *\*before\** sunset and in China it would start up to six hours *\*after\** sunset.

Radbaz (Spain, 14th cent.) deals with this question in his repona (1:76). He does not make reference to the verse cited by the Sforno but rather to a verse in Shemot. His explanation has even more interesting implications.

In Shemot (31:13), Hashem tells us, "Keep my Shabbat because it is a *\*sign\** between me and you throughout the generations." Shabbat is a sign of Hashem's closeness to His people. There is another Mitzvah which is referred to as a "sign," and that is the Mitzvah of circumcision. Radbaz suggests that just as the circumcision is a personal covenant between the individual and Hashem so, too, should each Jew see the Shabbat as his or her *\*personal\** covenant with Hashem rather than viewing the Shabbat as a covenant between Hashem and the Jewish People as a whole. Therefore, Radbaz concludes, each person is to observe the Shabbat wherever he may be according to his own longitude and latitude. It makes no difference at all that Jews elsewhere are observing the Shabbat during different hours. (Radbaz points out that the same logic may be followed concerning the Jewish holidays and Yom Kippur. [They, too, are referred to as "signs" -- see Menachot 36b. -MK])

#### III

Our discussion of the start of the Shabbat touches upon another interesting halachic question. Where is the international dateline according to the Torah? At which longitude does one cross from Shabbat into Sunday or from Sunday into Shabbat, depending upon which way one is traveling? Let us examine the various opinions of the Rishonim regarding this issue.

Interestingly enough, this question is discussed in numerous early Rabbinic sources. The Ba'al HaMe'or (Rav Zerachyah HaLevi, 13th cent. Provence) establishes a dateline based on a Gemara in Rosh Hashanah 20b. The Ba'al HaMe'or clearly delineates the dateline: It is 270 degrees (or 18 hours) to the west and 90 degrees (or 6 hours) to the east of Jerusalem. One who travels 90 degrees to the east of Israel must turn his calendar back one day. This opinion is mentioned by Rav Yehudah HaLevi (12th cent. Spain) in his Sefer HaKuzari (2:20) as well.

The Ba'al HaMe'or explains why the Gemara chose the point six hours to the east of Jerusalem to be the point that marks the break between the earliest and the latest moment on earth. This point, he explains, marks the easternmost edge of the civilized landmass (= the Asian continent), where it meets the Great Ocean (= the Pacific coast). This is the first point of the mainland that the sun encounters in its east to west circuit. It therefore stands to reason that when the sun rises over this point, it should be considered the very first moment of "Monday" on the globe. East of that point, Sunday is just beginning and Monday will not start for yet another 24 hours. (It is interesting to note that traveling ninety degrees to the east of Jerusalem indeed brings one to a point just off the coast of China, not far from Shanghai.)

We may conclude, based on the words of the Ba'al HaMe'or, that a person who lives just to the east of the point ninety degrees east of Jerusalem would celebrate Shabbat a day later than a person living just to the west of that point.

It is important to point out, however, that although the coast of China (the eastern-Asian nation that happens to meet the Pacific coast at Jerusalem's latitude) is within ninety degrees from Jerusalem, and therefore on the same side of the dateline as Israel, there are many coasts along the eastern Asian seaboard which lie far past the 90-degree line. In fact, the entire northern half of the continent (Korea, Siberia and the Kamchatka Peninsula) extends well past that line. The line also runs straight through Australia. There are numerous islands beyond the line as well, such as Japan, New Zealand, the Philippines, and all of the Pacific islands. When is Shabbat to be kept in these areas?

Following the opinion of the Ba'al HaMe'or, we would be led to conclude that all of the regions east of the 90-degree line ought to keep Shabbat a day later than those to the west of that line. This presents the Jewish communities of the Far East with somewhat of a religious paradox. The secular dateline runs approximately 145 degrees to the east of Israel. Therefore, everyone who lives between 90 degrees east of Israel and 145 degrees east of Israel will be keeping Shabbat on the day which is popularly referred to as Sunday!

#### IV

Throughout most of history this point was merely a theoretical one, as there was little contact between Jews of the West and the Far East. However, during the 1940's many European Jews, including a large group of yeshiva students from the famous Mir Yeshiva and other yeshivas, fled across Siberia and eventually to Japan in order to escape from the Nazi oppressors. Suddenly, the issue of when to observe Shabbat and Yom Kippur in the Far East became very pertinent. The yeshivas sent letters to all of the Torah authorities of the day, asking them for a clear halachic ruling on this issue.

Numerous authorities responded, in accordance with the apparent meaning of the Ba'al HaMe'or, that as soon as they found themselves beyond the 90-degree line, they must keep Shabbat on Sunday. (This opinion was upheld by Rav Yosef Dinkels of Jerusalem in his book "Sod Nekudah Deletata," Rav Chaim Zimmerman in his book "Agan HaSahar," and many others.)

A second opinion is presented by the Chazon Ish (HaRav Avraham Yeshayah Karelitz, who resided at that point in Bnai Brak, Israel) in his pamphlet "Yud-Chet Sha'ot." The Chazon Ish insisted that it was illogical to divide a landmass into two different date-zones. Basing his position on the words of Rav Yitzchak ben Rav Yosef HaYisraeli (12th cent.) in "Yesod Olam," he decided that when the dateline passes through a landmass, that entire landmass should observe Shabbat at the same time as those who live to the west (or the Israel-side) of the dateline. Thus, even though the eastern most tip of Siberia is some 60 degrees to the east of the 90-degree line, Jews living there should observe Shabbat on the same day as their neighbors to the west. (i.e. on the day generally recognized as Saturday and not on Sunday.) Similarly, all of Australia should observe Saturday as their Shabbat and not Sunday.

\*Islands\* to the east of the 90-degree dateline, however, remain a halachic curiosity. They must observe Shabbat a day later, even though they are on the Israel side of the secular dateline. This means that Jews in Japan, the Philippines, New Zealand, etc., should keep Shabbat on the day commonly referred to as Sunday. Even though Japan is some 45 degrees west of the Bering Strait (the eastern tip of the Asian continent), since it is not part of the mainland, it will observe Shabbat a day later. (I have heard that because of the Chazon Ish's ruling, some people in eastern Australia do not go swimming on Sunday. By leaving the shores of their continent they would be crossing a dateline and would find themselves swimming into Shabbat!)

So far we have seen two opinions concerning the location of the halachic dateline according to the Ba'al HaMe'or:

- (1) That it is to be drawn exactly ninety degrees to the east of Jerusalem.
- (2) The Chazon Ish's opinion that any landmass which stretches eastward past the 90-degree dateline extends the dateline to its eastern shore.

We should note that a number of authorities have not accepted the Ba'al HaMe'or's ninety degree law, basing their opinions on the words of other early Torah scholars instead. A number of them have tried to reconcile the Jewish dateline with the internationally recognized dateline. Due to considerations of space, however, these shall not be discussed here now. And finally, I would like to remind the reader that should you ever meet up with the question of the halachic dateline, be sure to consult your Local Orthodox Rabbi!

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"Jeffrey Gross <75310.3454@CompuServe.COM>" "Halachic Topics  
SELECTED HALACHOS RELATING TO PARSHAS EMOR

By Rabbi Doniel Neustadt

A discussion of Halachic topics related to the Parsha of the week. For final rulings, consult your Rav.

You should count for yourselves... seven weeks, they shall be complete (23:15). Forgetting to Count One Day

QUESTION: If one forgot to count one day in the Sefira, may he continue to count?

DISCUSSION: There is a major dispute among the Poskim of the Geonic era if forgetting to count one day invalidates the entire count. Some Rishonim are of the opinion that the Torah's command to count "seven complete weeks" renders the entire count as one entity, one long Mitzva. Consequently, forgetting to count one day destroys the entire sequence and no further counting is possible. Most other Poskim hold, however, that each day is considered a separate Mitzvah. One [or several] day's omission, therefore, has no bearing on counting the other days.

Shulchan Aruch [OC 489:8] rules like the majority opinion that one day's counting has no connection to the other days'. One must, therefore, continue to count the Sefira even when a day [or several days] were omitted. The Bracha over the count, however, should not be said, in deference to those who hold that omitting a day invalidates the entire Sefira. Mishna Berura recommends that one hear the Bracha from someone else, so that he can fulfill the Mitzva in the proper way, with a Bracha.

If a person is uncertain whether he missed the previous day's count, he is permitted to count the remaining days with a Bracha(1).

One who forgot to count during the night should count during the following day without a Bracha. He may then continue to count on the following evenings with a Bracha.

One who forgot to count on a Thursday night but remembered to do so on Friday afternoon after Kabbolas Shabbos and Maariv [before sunset], may count on the following days with a Bracha(2).

There is a dispute among the latter-day Poskim(3) concerning one who forgot to count one evening, but remembered to count the next day after Shkiah before nightfall (Bein Hashmashos). Some allow him to count on the following days with a Bracha while others do not. A problematic case like this should be presented to a Rov for a decision(4).

Shaves and Haircuts on Lag B'omer

QUESTION: Is it permitted to shave or take a haircut on the evening of Lag B'omer or does one need to wait until the morning?

DISCUSSION: The Rema [OC 493:2] says that haircutting may not take place on Lag B'omer until "Lag B'omer itself, not the evening [before]". The Poskim debate what the Rema meant: Some(5) say that he meant to exclude the evening before the day of Lag B'omer. In their view, haircutting may begin only on the morning of Lag B'omer. This interpretation is based on the fact that Lag B'omer itself is still included in the days of mourning over the death of the disciples of Rabbi Akiva. The Halachic

principle of Miktzas Hayom Kekulo, a small part of the day is considered like a whole day, permits us to lift the Aveilus restrictions after a small part of the day has passed in mourning.

Other Poskim(6), however, reject this interpretation of the Rema's ruling. In their opinion, the Rema meant to exclude only those who permit haircutting before the night of Lag B'omer has actually begun (Tzeis Hakochovim). Once it is definitely night, however, Lag B'omer has begun and haircutting is permissible.

Both of these views are quoted in the Mishna Berura. Unless one has a clear custom to the contrary, one may be lenient and take a haircut or a shave immediately upon nightfall of Lag

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B'omer(7). [Concerning weddings, however there are Poskim who hold that they should not be held on the evening of Lag B'omer,(8) while others are lenient in regard to weddings as well(9).]

#### FOOTNOTES:

1 OC 489:8, Mishna Berurah and Biur Halacha.

2 Shaarei Teshuva 489:4; Igros Moshe OC 4:99-3.

3 See Shaarei Teshuvah, ibid ; Birkei Yosef 489:17; Shoel U'maishiv 4:3-127.

4 See Kaf Hachayim 489:83 who rules not to say a Bracha, while Yabiya Omer 4:43 rules that a Bracha may be said. Surely, one who remembered to count within 9 minutes after sunset, may count on the following days with a Bracha - see Igros Moshe OC 4:62.

5 Levush, Gra, Machatzis Hashekel and others.

6 Chok Yaakov, Mor U'ketzia, Eliyahu Rabba and others.

7 See Kaf Hachayim 493:30.

8 See Mishnah Berura 493:11 quoting the Eliyahu Rabba. See also Shu"t Chasam Sofer OC 142.

9 Igros Moshe OC 1:159; Chelkas Yaakov 1:97

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#### OU Torah Insights Project Parshat Emor 5756

Parshat Emor contains the mitzvah of Sefirat Ha'Omer, the seven-week count from Pesach to Shavuot. As the nexus between Pesach and Shavuot, this mitzvah teaches that the primary goal of our redemption from Egyptian slavery was kabbalat HaTorah, our acceptance of the Torah at Mount Sinai. The Exodus from Egypt was only a prerequisite for the servitude that the Jewish people would accept at Mount Sinai. It is this concept that forms the basis for Rav Joseph B. Soleveitchik, z"tl's, understanding of the dialogue between G-d and Moshe Rabbeinu. G-d commands Moshe "to bring the children of Israel out of Egypt," to which Moshe responds, "Who am I that I should go to Pharaoh and that I should bring forth the children of Israel out of Egypt?"

Moshe argues that he is not the right person for this mission. He had a speech impediment and felt he would have no influence on Pharaoh. The Lord answered him, Do not worry, Moshe, for "I will be with you."

But the dialogue does not end there. G-d informs Moshe that "this shall be the sign that I have sent you: when you have brought forth the people out of Egypt, you shall serve G-d on this mountain." The Rav shows from this latter part of the verse that the purpose of G-d's freeing the Jewish nation from Egyptian

slavery was not to create a political and social entity, but to establish "a kingdom of priests and a holy nation." To be a political leader, there were people more qualified than Moshe, but to be rebbe of the Jewish people, Moshe

Rabbeinu was the most outstanding candidate. Only Moshe could lead the people to "serve G-d on this mountain." The period of Sefirat Ha'Omer offers an opportunity to journey each day toward the mountain of Sinai. Each day counted brings us closer towards Shavuot, strengthening our commitment to the Torah of Sinai. The Rav thus explains the Torah's repeated use of the word Shabbat in reference to Sefirat Ha'Omer. Just as G-d created the physical world in six days and set aside the seventh day as Shabbat, to be a

spiritual oasis, so must a Jew, during this expanded Shabbat, this seven-week period of Sefirat Ha'Omer, create his own spiritual world.

This is the message of the prayer of Sefirat Ha'Omer. "Master of the Universe, You commanded us to count the omer in order to purify us from our evil and defilement. Let there be purification for the souls of your people Israel from their impurities. May Sefirat Ha'Omer sanctify us with Your sublime Holiness."

Rabbi Bertram Leff

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"Menachem Leibtag <ml@etzion.org.il Chumash shiur...

#### PARSHAT HASHAVUA PARSHAT EMOR by Menachem Leibtag

Parshat Emor is famous for its lengthy presentation of the "chagim" (the Jewish holidays). These same holidays are also described in the other books of Chumash: \* in Sefer Shmot: Parshat Mishpatim & Ki-tisa; \* in Sefer Bamidbar: Parshat Pinchas; and \* in Sefer Dvarim: Parshat Re'ay. It would seem logical for ALL the laws concerning the chagim to be presented together in ONE parsha. However, Chumash prefers to separate them, allowing each Sefer to focus on a different thematic aspect of the "chagim".

This week's shiur contains two parts. Part One provides a general overview of the Chagim in Chumash. Part Two examines the double nature of the presentation of the chagim in Parshat Emor.

[As the shiur is very textual (more than usual), it is essential that you follow it with a Tanach at hand. Various questions which will arise in the shiur will be dealt with in the further Iyun Section.]

#### BACKGROUND / A DOUBLE CALENDAR

Before we begin, a quick note regarding the Biblical calendar.

The holidays in Chumash are described in terms of BOTH a solar AND lunar calendar. The solar calendar is based on the 365 day cycle of the sun, and contains the four seasons of the agricultural year ("tkufot ha'shanah"): the spring and fall equinox; the winter and summer solstice. The lunar calendar is based on the monthly cycle of the moon (roughly 29.5 days). However the precise day on which each month begins is determined by "bet-din" (i.e. "kiddush ha'chodesh"). These two calendars are correlated by the periodic addition of an 'extra' month (i.e. "ibur ha'shana").

Chumash employs BOTH the lunar and solar calendars in its description of the chagim.

#### PART ONE - THE CHAGIM IN CHUMASH ffffff

In Chumash, there are two 'sets' of chagim (holidays when work is forbidden): A) The Shalosh R'galim: Chag ha'Matzot, Shavuot, & Succot; (the three pilgrimage holidays). B) Y'mei Hadin: Rosh ha'Shana, Yom Kippur & Shmini Atzeret; (Days of Judgement/ better known as "Chagei Tishrei"). The Shalosh R'galim (A), as a unit, are presented twice in Sefer SHMOT and once in Sefer DVARIM: (1) in Parshat Mishpatim (Shmot 23:14-19) before Moshe ascends Har Sinai to receive the first Luchot (tablets); (2) in Parshat Ki-tisa (Shmot 34:18-26) when Moshe Rabeinu ascends Har Sinai to receive the second Luchot; (3) in Parshat Re'ay (Dvarim 16:1-17) while describing the special laws of "ha'makom asher Yivchar Hashem l'shakeyn shmo sham": the site where the Mikdash is to be built. In each of these three instances, the dates on which these "r'galim" fall are described ONLY by the agricultural time of year in which they are celebrated, i.e. the SOLAR calendar: Chag Ha'Matzot: 'b'aviv' - in the spring; Chag Ha'Katzir: the wheat harvest - in the early summer; Chag Ha'Asif: the fruit harvest - in the fall. In each of these three 'parshiot', the primary mitzvah discussed is obligation of "aliyah l'Regel" - to make a pilgrimage to the central location where the Mikdash is located (see Shmot 23:17, 34:23-24, Dvarim 16:2,6,11,15,16).

In contrast to Shmot and Dvarim, Sefer VAYIKRA (chapter 23/ Emor) and Sefer BAMIDBAR (chapters 28->29/ Pinchas) describe BOTH the "shalosh

r'galim" (A) AND "Chagei Tishrei" (B). Parshat Pinchas presents the chagim in order of the specific month and day when each holiday is to be celebrated, i.e. by the LUNAR calendar. The chagim in Parshat Emor follow the same basic order. Parshiot Emor and Pinchas actually complement each other. When introducing each holiday, Parshat Emor states: "v'hikravtem ishe l'Hashem" - ["and you shall bring an offering to God"/ see Vayikra 23:8,25,27,36], but does not specify the precise offering. In Parshat Pinchas we find exactly what that offering is to be, i.e. the special additional korban (Musaf) which is to be offered on each holiday. [A more precise title for this parsha would be Korbanot Ha'Tmidim v'ha'Musafim - as it details the korban Tamid and Musaf brought throughout the course of the entire year, including Shabbat and Rosh Chodesh! / We read from this 'parsha' for maftir on every chag, and we quote from it in tfilat Musaf.] It is only in Parshat Emor (Vayikra 23:1-44) that we find the details of the unique mitzvah of each holiday: Chag Ha'Matzot - the special "omer" offering (barely); Shavuot - the special "shte ha'lechem" offering (wheat); Rosh Ha'Shana - "Yom Truah" - blowing the shofar; Yom Kippur - fasting; Succot - sitting in the Sucah; and the "arba minim" (lulav and etrog etc.).

Based on this analysis, one could summarize as follows: \* Sifrei Shmot and Dvarim present the shalosh r'galim in relation to their common purpose as a time for "aliyah l'regel" during the critical times of the agricultural (solar) year. \* Parshat Pinchas details the specific korban Musaf of each chag (according to the lunar date of the holidays). \* Parshat Emor describes the unique mitzvah of each chag (using both lunar and solar). -----

**PART TWO - THE DOUBLE NATURE OF THE CHAGIM IN PARSHAT EMOR** Parshat Emor, like Pinchas, presents the chagim in order of their LUNAR dates (month/day). Nevertheless, Emor is different. When introducing the special mitzvah to be performed in the Mikdash on each of the SHALOSH R'GALIM, the agricultural season (i.e. the SOLAR date) is mentioned as well: CHAG HA'MATZOT Omer: "When you enter the Land... and YOU HARVEST the fields, you must bring the "omer" the FIRST HARVEST to the Kohen (23:10); SHAVUOT Shte Ha'lechem: SEVEN WEEKS LATER - "and you shall bring a NEW flour offering..." (23:16); SUCCOT Arba Minim: "On the 15th day of the 7th month WHEN YOU GATHER THE PRODUCE OF THE LAND... and you shall take on the first day a 'hadar' fruit..." (23:39). DOUBLE DATES As a matter of fact, a careful examination of Parshat Emor shows that the agricultural aspect of each of the "shalosh r'galim" is presented in a manner entirely INDEPENDENT of the lunar date! For example, the mitzvah to bring the korban "ha'omer" and "shte ha'lechem" is presented in a separate 'dibur' (23:9-22) which makes no mention at all of the lunar date! Similarly, the mitzvah of the "arba minim" (23:39-41) is presented independent of the mitzvah to sit in the succah (23:33-38). [Compare these two parshiot carefully!] Why must the structure of Emor be so complicated? Why doesn't the Torah employ one standard set of dates? Why are the agricultural mitzvot presented independently? To answer these questions, we must return to the opening psukim of Vayikra, chapter 23. A DOUBLE 'HEADER' The first four psukim of chapter 23 form a problematic introduction: "And God told Moshe, tell Bnei Yisrael... 'Moadei Hashem' (fixed times), which YOU shall call 'mikraei kodesh' (a sacred gathering) - These are the 'MOADIM': SIX days work may be done, but the SEVENTH day shall be a SHABBAT SHABBATON 'mikra kodesh'... THESE are the 'MOADEI HASHEM'...: On the 14th day of the first month - Pesach On the 15th day of the first month - chag ha'Matzot... (23:1-6) Is shabbat to be considered one of the 'moadim'? If yes, why does pasuk 4 repeat the header "ayleh moadei Hashem"? If not, why is it mentioned at all in the first three psukim? Furthermore, there appear to be two types of 'mikraei kodesh' in Parshat Emor. (1) MOADIM - those that Bnei Yisrael declare: "asher tik'ru otam [that YOU shall call] - mikraei kodesh" (23:2) (2) SHABBAT - which God has set aside to be a 'mikra kodesh' (read 23:3 carefully!).

This distinction, and the repetition of the header "ayleh moadei Hashem" in 23:4, indicate the first three psukim can be considered a 'double' header: MO'ADIM / SHABBATONIM. This 'double header' is reflected in the overall structure of the parsha. First, each chag is presented in Parshat Emor by its lunar date, followed by a statement that this 'moed' should be a mikra kodesh, the prohibition to do work ("kol mlechet avodah lo taasu"), and the

mitzvah to offer a korban Musaf ("v'hikravtem ishe l'Hashem"). (1) THE MO'ADIM - MIKRAEI KODESH OPENING PASUK: "AYLEH MOADEI HASHEM... ASHER TIKRU..." (23:4) CHAG HAMATZOT : 23:6-8 SHAVUOT: (Interestingly enough, this holiday lacks a lunar date and the phrase "v'hikravtem...") ROSH HA'SHANA: 23:25 YOM KIPPUR: 23:27-28 SUCCOT & SHMINI ATZERET: 23:33-36 CLOSING PASUK: "AYLEH MOADEI HASHEM ASHER TIKRU OTAM..." Intertwined in this parsha, we find a second aspect of each chag, one which relates to the concept of the SHABBATON- the second header. In relation to the Shalosh R'galim, the SHABBATON aspect always relates to the special agricultural mitzvah! Each time this aspect is mentioned, the concluding phrase: "chukat olam l'doroteichem [b'chol moshveteichem]" is found (23:14,21,31,41). Therefore, the second header 'SHABBAT' relates to this aspect of the Chagim: (2) SHABBATON Chag Ha'MATZOT - "mi'mochorat ha'SHABBAT" (23:11) SHAVUOT - "ad mimochorat ha'SHABBAT ha'shviit..." (23:16) ROSH HA'SHANA - "SHABBATON, zichron truah..." (23:24) YOM KIPPUR - SHABBAT SHABBATON hi lachem..." (23:32) SUCCOT & - ba'yom ha'rishon SHABBATON... SHMINI ATZERET - u'bayom ha'Shmini SHABBATON" (23:39) Note, that when this aspect is first introduced in relation to Chag Ha'Matzot, it contains a separate 'dibur' and the notating of the agricultural date (23:9-14) "And God spoke to Moshe saying... When you ENTER THE LAND that I am giving you REAP ITS HARVEST, you shall bring the OMER - the first sheaf of your harvest to God. This OMER shall be waived in front of God... on the day after SHABBAT the Kohen shall waive it.... [This analysis could explain Chazal's understanding that here, SHABBAT refers to the first day of chag ha'Matzot as opposed to the tzdukim (Sadducees) who argued that it actually refers to first Shabbat after Pesach. It is now obvious that Chazal's interpretation reflects a much deeper understanding of the entire parsha.] The most explicit example of this pattern is found in the psukim that describe Succot. First, the Torah refers to this holiday as a MIKRA KODESH in relation to its lunar "On the 15th day of the 7th month Chag Succot seven days: on the first day there shall be a MIKRA KODESH... and on the eighth day a MIKRA KODESH..." (23:35-36) [As this is the last 'moed', the next pasuk summarizes all of the chagim: "ayleh Moadei Hashem..." (23:37-38)]. Then, in a very abrupt fashion, AFTER summarizing the moadim, the Torah returns to Succot again, but now calls it a SHABBATON: "'ACH' - on the 15th day of the seventh month, when you GATHER THE HARVEST OF YOUR FIELD, you shall celebrate for seven days, on the first day - a SHABBATON, and on the eighth day - a SHABBATON." (23:39) To summarize, we have shown that the entire parsha exhibits a double nature, as reflected in its 'double header' and the use of both the solar and lunar calendars in the description of the chagim. What is the meaning of this double structure? THE AGRICULTURAL ASPECT As mentioned above, Parshat Emor details a special agricultural related mitzvah for each of the shalosh r'galim: Chag ha'Matzot: The Korban Ha'Omer- from the first BARLEY harvest. Shavuot: The Korban Shte Ha'lechem, from the first WHEAT harvest. Succot: Taking the 'Arba Minim', the four species - [the lulav, etrog, hadas and arava] These mitzvot relate directly to the agricultural season in Eretz Yisrael in which these holidays fall. In the spring, barley is the first grain crop to become ripe. During the next seven weeks, the wheat crop ripens and is harvested. As this is the only time of the year when wheat grows in Eretz Yisrael, these seven weeks are indeed a critical time, for the grain which is consumed during the entire year is harvested during this short time period. The 'arba minim' which are brought to the Mikdash on Succot, also relate to the agricultural importance of the fruit harvest ("pri eytz hadar v'kapot tmarim") at this time of the year, and the need for water in the forthcoming rainy season ("arvei nachal"). It is specifically when the Torah relates to these agricultural mitzvot that these holidays are referred to as SHABBATONIM. The reason is quite simple. Shabbat relates to the days of the week, and thus, to a natural cycle caused by the sun. So too, the agricultural seasons of the year. They also relate to the natural cycle of the sun (the 365 day cycle of the earth revolving around the sun that causes the seasons). As these holidays are celebrated during the most critical times of the agricultural year, the Torah commands us to gather at this time of the year in the Bet HaMikdash and offer special korbanot from our harvest.

Instead of relating these phenomena of nature to a pantheon of gods, as the Canaanites did, we must recognize that it is God's hand behind nature and we must thank Him for our harvest. [ This is the challenge of Judaism, to find God while working and living within the framework of nature. This is reflected in the blessing we make over bread: "ha'motzi lechem min ha'aretz". Even though we perform 99% of work in the process of making bread (e.g. sowing, reaping, winnowing, grinding, kneading, baking etc.), we thank God as though He had given us bread directly from the ground!]

**THE HISTORICAL HOLIDAYS** Even though the agricultural calendar provides sufficient reason to celebrate these holidays, the Torah finds HISTORICAL significance as well to these seasonal holidays: The spring commemorates our redemption from Egypt. The grain harvest coincides with the time of Matan Torah. During the fruit harvest we recall our supernatural existence in the desert under the "annanei kavod" (clouds of God's glory) in the desert. Just as the Torah employs the 'solar' date of the chagim in relation to the agricultural mitzvot, the Torah employs the lunar date of these chagim in relation to their historical significance. For example, when describing Chag Ha'Matzot which commemorates the historical event of Yetziat Mitzraim, the lunar date of the 15th day of the first month is used (23:6). Similarly, when the Torah refers to Succot as a Mikra Kodesh, it employs solely the lunar date and emphasizes the mitzvah of sitting in the succah, in commemoration of our dwelling in succot during our journey through the desert (see 23:34-35,43). Specifically, the lunar calendar contains historical significance, for we count the months in commemoration of our Exodus from Egypt, the most momentous event in our national history. This is reflected in the very first mitzvah given to the Jewish nation in Sefer Shmot: "ha'chodesh ha'zeh lachem ROSH CHODASHIM..." This month (in which you are leaving Egypt) will be for you the FIRST month... (see Shmot 12:1-3).

**REDEMPTION IN THE SPRING** From the repeated emphasis in Chumash that we celebrate our redemption from Egypt in the early spring ("chodesh ha'aviv" /see Shmot 13:2-4 and Dvarim 16:1-2), it would appear that it was not incidental that the Exodus took place at that time. Rather, God desired that our national birth take place at the same time of year when the growth cycle of nature recommences. [For a similar reason, it would appear that Hashem desired that Bnei Yisrael enter the Promised Land in the first month of the spring (see Yehoshua 4:19 & 5:10).] One could suggest that the celebration of our national redemption specifically in the spring emphasizes its proper meaning. Despite its importance, our freedom attained at Yetziat Mitzraim should be understood as only the INITIAL stage of our national spiritual 'growth', just as the spring marks only the initial stage in the growth process of nature! Just as the blossoming of nature in the spring leads to the grain harvest in the early summer and fruit harvest in the late summer, so to our national freedom must lead to the achievement of higher goals in our national history.

Thus, counting seven weeks from chag ha'matzot until chag ha'shavuot (sfirat ha'omer) emphasizes that Shavuot (commemorating the Giving of the Torah) should be considered the culmination of the process that began at Yetziat Mitzrayim, just as the grain harvest is the culmination of its growth process that began in the spring. [One would expect that this historical aspect of Shavuot, i.e. Matan Torah, should also be mentioned in Parshat Emor. For some reason, it is not. We will deal with this issue in our shiur on Shavuot. Likewise, the agricultural and historical aspect of the Rosh HaShana and Yom Kippur in this parsha will be explained in shiurim prior to those holidays.]

By combining the two calendars, the Torah teaches us that during the critical times of the agricultural year we not only thank Hashem for His providence over nature but we also thank Him for His providence over our history. This is an extremely important concept, that not only is Hashem the Force behind nature, but He also guides the history of nations. In a polytheistic society, these various attributes were divided among many gods. In an atheistic society, man fails to see God in either. According to Chumash, man must recognize God's providence in all realms of his daily life; by recognizing His hand in the unfolding of our national history, and through perceiving His greatness in the creation of nature.

shabbat shalom

menachem

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\* TORAH WEEKLY \* ighlights of the Weekly Torah Portion  
with "Sing, My Soul!" thoughts on Shabbos Zemiro  
Parshas Emor For the week ending 15 Iyar 5756 3 & 4 May 1996

Summary

The Kohanim are commanded to avoid contact with corpses in order to maintain a high standard of ritual purity. They are permitted to attend the funeral of only their seven closest relatives: Father, mother, wife, son, daughter, brother, and unmarried sister. The Kohen Gadol may not attend the funeral even of his closest relatives. Certain marital restrictions are placed on the Kohanim. The nation is required to honor the Kohanim. The physical defects that invalidate a Kohen from serving in the Temple are listed. Terumah, a produce tithe given to the Kohanim, may be eaten only by Kohanim and their household. An animal may be sacrificed in the Temple after it is eight days old and is free from any physical defects. The nation is commanded to "sanctify Hashem" (Kiddush Hashem), by insuring that one's behavior is always exemplary, and by being prepared to surrender one's life rather than murder, engage in licentious relations, or worship idols. The special characteristics of the holidays are described, and the nation is reminded not to do certain Melacha -- creative work -- during them. New grain ("Chadash") may not be used until after the second day of Pesach, when the Omer of barley is offered when there is a Temple. The Parsha explains the laws of preparing the oil for the Menorah and baking the Lechem HaPanim (the show-bread) in the Temple. A man blasphemes Hashem and is executed as prescribed in the Torah.

Commentaries

**THE ETERNAL FLAME**

"Command the children of Israel ... to kindle a continual lamp." (24:2)  
Go into any Synagogue when it's dark and you will see a small lamp shining above the holy ark. It is called the Ner Tamid - the eternal flame. That lamp is a memorial of the Ner Ma'aravi (western lamp) of the Menorah which the Kohanim lit in the Beis Hamikdash. The Ner Ma'aravi burned miraculously. It never went out. Every evening, when the Kohen came to kindle the flames he would find the Ner Ma'aravi still alight from the previous evening. He would remove the still-burning wick and oil, clean out its receptacle and then put back the burning wick and the oil. Then he would kindle all the other lamps with the western lamp.

But when the Romans came and destroyed the Beis Hamikdash, it seemed that the little solitary flame had been put out forever: In Rome, there stands a triumphal arch built by the Emperor Titus. One of its bas-reliefs depicts the Menorah being carried through the streets of Rome as part of the booty pillaged from the Beis Hamikdash. All its lamps are dark. It looks like some expensive antique, soon to languish under the dust of ages in some Vatican vault.

But did Titus really extinguish that eternal flame?

In his commentary on Chumash, the Malbim explains that the Beis Hamikdash is a macrocosm of the human body:

If you look at a plan of the Heichal (Sanctuary) in the Beis Hamikdash, you

will notice that the placement of the various vessels - the altar, the table, the Menorah - corresponds to the location of the vital organs in the human body. In other words, each of the Temple's vessels represents a human organ. The Menorah is the vessel that corresponds to the heart.

The Menorah is the Jewish Heart. Why is it that so many young people today are choosing to return to the beliefs and practices that their parents had forgotten, and their grandparents despaired of seeing continued? It is as though some mystical force is transmitted in the spiritual genes of every Jew. A light which burns away on the Menorah of the Jewish heart across the millennia. A light which can never be extinguished, which burns miraculously, even without replenishment of the oil or wicks of mitzvah observance.

So, in a mystical sense the light that Titus tried to put out, continues to burn in the Menorah of the Jewish heart. But even in the physical world, the light of the Menorah burns on...

It would come as a great disappointment to Titus, but that Menorah which

is collecting dust somewhere in the Vatican is not the original Menorah. It is a copy. The original Menorah was hidden away (together with the other vessels) in the caves and tunnels under the Temple Mount, so it would not be taken as booty.

Now, if, while the Temple was standing, the Western Lamp of the Menorah burned miraculously without human assistance, so why shouldn't it go on burning even after it was buried?

In fact, that Western Lamp continues to burn miraculously under the Temple Mount throughout the long dark night of exile. It continues to burn to this day. And it will continue to burn until Mashiach comes. Then, the light of the Menorah of the Jewish heart will be united with the light of the Menorah in the Holy Beis Hamikdash. (Based on the Sfas Emes)

#### Doing Time

"You shall not desecrate My holy Name; rather I should be sanctified among the Children of Israel. I am Hashem Who sanctifies you." (22:32) Two Jews were traveling by train to work. One was religious, the other, to say the least, less so. "Look at this!" exclaimed the less religious of the two, tossing the newspaper to his religious companion. There, on the front page, was a picture of a very religious-looking Jew, complete with a long flowing black beard. Underneath the picture the caption read: ARRESTED FOR TAX EVASION! "So much for a long black beard!" sneered the secular Jew. "The trouble was..." replied the other, "the trouble was that under the beard, he was unshaven..."

When a Jew puts on a Kippah, he becomes an ambassador for Hashem. His actions are scrutinized by all who see him: If he is crooked in business, no-one will call him a crook, they will call him a crooked Jew! But if he's straight, it is Hashem Who will take the credit.

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The Midrash tells of an Arab who sold a donkey to Rabbi Shimon ben Shatach.

Shortly after the purchase, Rabbi Shimon discovered a valuable stone under the donkey's saddle. "I paid for a donkey, not a gem" he said, and promptly returned the jewel to the Arab. When Rabbi Shimon handed the stone back to the Arab, the Arab exclaimed "Blessed is Hashem, the G-d of Shimon ben Shatach." (Heard from Rabbi Nota Schiller)

#### CONCRETE TIME

"And you shall count to yourselves from the day after the Shabbos [i.e., the day after Pesach] from the day of your bringing the Omer offering which is waved, seven Shabbosos - complete and perfect they must be". (23:15) "When are they perfect? When they do the will of The Omnipresent." (Midrash)

Nothing in this world lasts forever. Everything has its time and then passes. Even the heavens and the earth will pass into nothingness. Nevertheless, everything that comes into the world has a certain period of existence, however short or long. However, there is one thing in the world for which the concept of 'span of existence' has no meaning whatsoever. It is no sooner present, than it has already changed, passed and is no longer. That thing is Time itself. Every second as it emerges into Creation, in the blink of an eye, it is gone. Time passed is no longer, and every second becomes immediately and at once, the past.

Man, however, through his actions in Time can give Time itself a substance that makes it eternal. An action gives the time in which that action is being done the substance and the character of the action itself. So if time is used to do a mitzvah, to do a kindness, or to learn Torah, then because these things are eternal in themselves, they in turn eternalize Man's time. This is what the Midrash means when it says "When are they (the weeks) perfect? When they do the will of the Omnipresent." The Counting of the Omer is a paradigm for the years of the life of Man - the "Seven Shabbosos" allude to "The days of our years have in them 70 years" (Tehillim). The mitzva of Counting The Omer demands that "complete and perfect they must be." When those hours do the will of Hashem, then Time itself stays eternally concrete and substantial. (Rabbi Shlomo Yosef Zevin)

Haftarah: Yechezkel 44

The literal meaning of the word 'Kohen' includes both the idea of basis and direction. Even when the masses are infatuated by heathen concepts, and

immorality is rife amongst the powerful, the Kohen must guard the sanctuary of the Torah, re-affirming both the basis and the direction of Jewish life. However, the priests did not always live up to their calling - and their name - and Hashem proclaimed that they were to be barred from the priestly functions of bringing the offerings. However in contrast to these people, the Haftarah depicts those priests who, revering their ancestor Zadok, showed a brilliant contrast and kept the true spirit of the tribe of Levi. (Adapted from Rabbi Mendel Hirsch)

Sing, My Soul Insights into the Zemiros sung at the Shabbos table throughout the generations.

Tzamaz Nafshi - "My Soul Thirsts..."

"If those who have withdrawn (from the ways of Torah) wish to return from their ways, let them do so before they lie in the grave - the house designated for all living."

This stanza in Rabbi Avraham Ibn Ezra's classic is based on a passage in Iyov (30:23) in which man's mortality finds epic expression: "For I am aware that You will bring me to death, and to the house designated for all living." The great Biblical commentator and poet cries out in song that "my soul thirsts for G-d, the living G-d; my heart and flesh sing to the living G-d," the refrain which is sung at the end of each stanza. What greater expression of longing could there be than that of man's desire - and opportunity - to unite with his Creator while his heart and flesh can still sing His praises, before they reach the inevitable destination of all mortals. One is capable of even singing about death when he reflects at the Shabbos table on the precious opportunities of life and return.

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"RavFrand" List - Rabbi Frand on Parshas Emor -

#### Have No Regrets When You Offer Your Thanksgiving Offering

In addition to the mitzvos of the Kehunah [Priesthood], this week's Parsha contains some of the mitzvos which pertain to Korbonos [Sacrifices]. The pasuk [verse] states "If you will bring a Thanksgiving Offering to G-d, it shall be offered willingly" [Vayikra 22:29]. Rash"i explains that according to the simple interpretation "Irtzonchem" (willingly) means that it should be "Irtzon lachem" (acceptable [to G-d] for you) -- i.e. it should be offered in accordance with ritual law and not with improper intentions.

We will, however, interpret this expression "al pi derech ha'drush v'hashkafa" [in a homiletic manner]. Why is it that particularly regarding the Korban Todah [Thanksgiving offering], the Torah found it necessary to stress that the offering should be brought "willingly"?

The Kesav Sofer (son of the Chasam Sofer) writes, that to understand this, we must appreciate why and when a person brings a Korban Todah. A Korban Todah is exactly what the words mean -- an offering of Thanksgiving. The Talmud tells us that even nowadays there are four categories of people who must express thanksgiving (through prayer). For example, an ill person who became well or a person who left jail to freedom has to bring Korban Todah.

Consequently, we can understand that when someone brings a Korban Todah it might not be completely "willingly". The person may feel something less than the fullest sense of thanks. The person may perhaps think, why do I have to bring a Korban Todah for having been sick and then healed, better I should have never been sick in the first place. Given the option, wouldn't one rather never have been sick, rather than have to undergo a serious but successful operation?

Therefore the Torah tells us -- no! When we bring a Korban Todah -- after having undergone the circumstances that lead to a Korban Todah

-- that offering must be brought with the fullest sense of thanksgiving. A person has to realize, as difficult as it may seem at the time, that those circumstances -- the sicknesses and ordeals that he had to live through -- in some way or another was what the Ribbono Shel Olam felt was best for him in the total picture. Because of that ordeal, he is now a stronger person, a wiser person, a more compassionate person. It will be a Kapara [forgiveness -- He will have to atone less in the world to come.] For some reason, in G-d's Grand Plan, it was best for him to be sick or be jailed and then, later, redeemed.

Therefore the Torah says that when you offer a Korban Todah to G-d - don't think "What did I need this for?". On the contrary, offer the Korban with the greatest expressions of willingness, in order that you should come to the recognition that all that G-d does is for the person's benefit.

#### Kiddush and Chillul Hashem are Not at Opposite Ends of the Spectrum

A few pasukim [verses] later, [22:32], the Torah continues, "You shall not desecrate My holy Name, rather I should be sanctified among the Children of Israel, I am HASHEM, Who sanctifies you." This pasuk contains one of the most serious sins and one of the most important mitzvos in the Torah -- the prohibition of Chillul Hashem and the mitzvah of Kiddush Hashem.

If one thinks about the way the pasuk is phrased and the juxtaposition of the two concepts, it seems rather strange. In the same breath, the Torah says, "Don't make a Chillul Hashem [desecration of G-d's name] and "Make a Kiddush Hashem [sanctification thereof]".

Do not Chillul Hashem and Kiddush Hashem occupy opposite ends of the spectrum? Is it not true that when one is Mikadesh Hashem, it is the furthest thing in the world from a Chillul Hashem? Isn't it true that when one, G-d forbid, is Mechallel Hashem, it is the furthest thing in the world from a Kiddush Hashem? Therefore, is it not peculiar and odd that the Torah puts them together in the same breath?

Perhaps this is not strange at all. The Torah is trying to tell us that, on the contrary, it is not true that Chillul Hashem and Kiddush Hashem are on opposite ends of the spectrum. The Torah is telling us "I want you to make a Kiddush Hashem of my name -- and while you are doing it, make sure that you do not make a Chillul Hashem!"

How many times have we seen that in the name of "Kiddush Hashem," in the name of Torah, in the name of Chessed, under the banner of the noblest of causes, people rush in and sometimes, in the act of Kiddush Hashem can create the biggest Chillul Hashem? Even when something is a mitzvah, and it is precious and beautiful, still one must remember not to get carried away with himself.

Let My Name be sanctified amidst the congregation of Israel -- but take heed that in the process of this Kiddush Hashem, don't desecrate my Holy Name!

#### Extremism Can Easily Change Directions

At the end of Parshas Emor we have a very, very strange incident in the Torah. The verse tells us that the son of a Jewish woman got into an argument, and he committed the crime of blasphemy. He cursed (Rachmana l'tzlan) the Name of the Ribbono Shel Olam.

This section begins with the words "And the son of a Israelite woman went out". The Medrash is bothered -- where did he go out from? The Yalkut Shimoni brings different interpretations explaining from where he went out. Rav Berachya says "He went out from the previous section in the Torah". What is so upsetting about the previous section in the Torah?

The previous section is the parsha of the Lechem HaPanim [Show Bread]. These were the twelve loaves of bread placed on the Shulchon [Table] in the Mishkan. The loaves remained on the Shulchon the entire week, from Shabbos to Shabbos. Why was this individual so upset about the Lechem HaPanim? The Medrash says that

he complained that this was an inappropriate way to treat G-d. He was upset at the fact that rather than offering G-d warm -- fresh -- bread, we were offering him stale -- week old -- bread. "This is how you treat the King, King of Kings?", he protested! Because of this, he got so upset, he went out and blasphemed the name of G-d.

Not only is it difficult to understand why this person was so upset, but the resulting change in course is bizarre. What was bothering him? That we do not treat G-d correctly. And then, this same person turns around and he himself curses G-d! What is occurring with such a person?

The Yalkut Yehudah says that this is not strange. This person is an extremist (kitzoni). When a person is subject to extremism, he can easily go from side to side. One day he can be more particular about the 'Honor or Heaven' than anybody else -- than the Torah itself. Then, that same person can shift all the way, with the swing of the pendulum, that G-d forbid, he blasphemes the Name of Heaven.

The Ramba"m tells us that the behaviors of a person (with the exception of Anger and Haughtiness) have to be follow the Golden Mean (Derech hamemutze), the middle path. But when a person is subject to extremes, then he can be extreme for something one day and be extreme for something that is 180 degrees away on the spectrum the next day.

This describes the blasphemer in the Parsha. A person who can get so upset that he became more zealous than the Torah itself, in the end can become a Blasphemer. The Middle Road is the road of a true servant of G-d.

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#### PARSHAS EMOR DIVINE HUMANISM --

A major section of Parshas Emor discusses the intricacies of Jewish holidays. Though details of individual holidays are discussed in other Torah portions, this week the Torah combines all of them in one section and summarizes the commands while providing some details. When the Torah mentions the holiday of Sukkos it details laws of lulav and esrog. It demands abstention on Yom Kippur and it touches upon the mitzvah of shofar while detailing the laws of Rosh Hashana. It mentions the special offerings brought on Passover.

However, in discussing the upcoming holiday of Shavuos the Torah adds a commandment that seemingly has no relevance in any way to that particular holiday. The Torah charges the Jewish nation to commemorate the receipt of its sacred Torah. First it charges the Jews to count for seven complete weeks after Passover. Then it defines the particular grain offerings to be brought on Shavuos. Then it mandates a mitzvah that seems out of place. Leviticus 23:22: "When you reap the harvest of your land you shall not remove the corners of your field, nor shall you gather any gleanings of the harvest: you shall leave them for the poor"

Why would the Torah insert the command of charity, clearly a humanistic virtue, right in the midst of discussing the celebration of Shavuos, the holiday of divinity, when Moshe received the Torah?

During the infamous "death march" that occurred in the final days of World War II, the Nazis wanted to remove prisoners from concentration camps in Poland and march them to slave labor camps in Germany, in an attempt to shield both the atrocities and the prisoners from the allies. Elimelech Kindelehrer was amongst them. Elimelech pleaded and begged for a few moments of rest during the fatal trek. He promised that after two minutes of repose he would run and catch up to the group. Miraculously, the soldiers guarding him consented, but threatened him with sudden death if he would

not return. He did not. As soon as the group marched from view, he ran to a nearby shack and hid under some hay. Immediately upon entering, he heard ferocious barking from a dog that was wandering nearby. Moments later he heard two soldiers.

"Where is the Jewish swine? He must be hiding in the shack!"

All of a sudden the dog began to howl thunderously.

"He couldn't be in there! The dog would have eaten him alive!"

"Let's shoot the dog and enter the shack," said the first soldier. The other soldier turned in disbelief.

"Have you no compassion? Why would you shoot the poor dog? He never did

anything to you!"

With that, the soldiers left the shack and Reb Elimelech was eventually rescued by a British platoon.

Rav Meir Simcha HaCohen of Dvinsk explains that people have a tendency to feel that the Torah is only useful for mitzvos that are esoteric. The laws of kashrus and shatnez need a divine tag; after all, they are chukim -- laws clearly given for reasons known only to the Almighty. Mitzvos with a human edge however, should be meted and designed, regulated and modified, by society. Society knows what is best for man.

By inserting the laws of charity directly into the chapter of celebrating the divine revelation at Sinai, the Torah is announcing that its humanistic charges are also divine. The Germans were amongst the most cultured and proper of any nation. They gave us the morals of Neitzsche, the philosophy of Kant, and the music of Wagner. But mortal ethics change with mortal want. Neitzsche's morals were redefined by Eichmann, the philosophies of Kant were replaced by Goering's credos, and the music of Wagner accompanied

the goose steps of mass murderers. The Germans kept their humanistic compassion for dogs while hunting Jews as they would hunt beasts.

Our Pirkei Avos (Ethics of the Fathers) deals with issues such as; greeting all mankind with a smile, being patient when judging and loving peace. Yet it opens with the words, "Moshe received the Torah at Sinai." It proceeds to record a direct line of transmission that links Talmudic sages to Sinai. It is declaring that even the most socially correct values must be adhered to because of a divine responsibility. Because unlike secular humanism, divine humanism is eternally infallible and irrevocable. Good Shabbos (c) 1996 Rabbi Mordechai Kamenetzky

Dedicated by Dr. & Mrs. Ernest Goldman in memory of Joseph Michael of blessed memory

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Bircas Hatorah <bircas@jer1.co.il>"" Weekly Words of Torah from Bircas Parshas Emor

Selected translated and arranged by Rabbi Dov Rabinowitz

"And you shall announce on this selfsame day, it will be for you a Sacred Announcing" (23,21)

The Gri"z Ha Levy of Brisk observes that "on this selfsame day" is written only in the context of Shavuos. He explains this in the light of what the Ramba"m writes (Kiddush HaChodesh 3,16) that a month may be sanctified retroactively. (This sanctification establishes on which day the new month

begins, and thus whether the previous month will have had 29 or 30 days; it depends on when two witnesses see the appearance of the new moon, and come

to give their evidence in the Beis Din. It is normally done on what would have been the 30th day of the previous month, to establish that this day will in fact be the first day of the new month. DR). Thus, even if the witnesses come (to the Beis Din) towards the end of a month (to report that they saw the new moon on the 30th day of the previous month) they go back and count the (current) month from the 30th day (of the previous month). This means that (all) the other Festivals have the possibility that, on the day on which the Festival is celebrated, the Festival is not sanctified. For instance, if the witnesses came after the end of the Festival, then the sanctification of the month, and of the Festival, are adjusted retroactively.

But with Shavuos this does not apply, as the date of Shavuos does not depend (intrinsically) on the day of the month (in which it occurs), but rather on the (passage of 49 days since the) offering of the Omer. As it is taught that Shavuos sometimes (falls) on the fourth (of the month of Sivan), sometimes on the fifth, sometimes on the sixth. (Although today Shavuos always falls on the 6th of Sivan, this is because we can no longer sanctify the months by witnesses observing the appearance of the new moon, and thus each one of our months always has the same length. DR) So the day of Shavuos depends on when the month of Nissan was designated, and as a result, at the time when the Festival of Shavuos (is celebrated), it is no longer possible to change its season, as the Ramba"m explains that only if the witnesses come at the end of a month do we resanctify the month retroactively, and go back and adjust the computation of its days from the 30th of the previous month, implying that once a month has ended, and the next month has already been inaugurated, (the first month) can no longer be adjusted.

This explains why it says "on this selfsame day" only with regard to Shavuos, since on "this selfsame day" it is already completely determined; but none of the other Festivals has this status.

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"And you shall dwell in Succos for seven days ... so that your descendants may know that I made the Children of Yisroel to dwell in Succos when I took them out of the land of Mitsraim" (23,42)

The Divrei Eliyahu brings the Avodas HaGershoni in the name of the Gaon of

Vilna to answer the well known question why do we celebrate the festival of Succos during (the month of) Tishrei? For the Succos (mentioned in the possuk) refer to the Clouds of the Manifestation of HaShem (literally Clouds of Honor) which surrounded them in the desert, so it would seem more

appropriate to celebrate (Succos) in (the month of) Nissan, when the Clouds originated (after they came out of Mitsraim).

However (we must consider that) when they made the golden calf, the Clouds withdrew, and did not return until the Israelites began the construction of the Mishkan (Sanctuary).

Now, Moshe descended from Mount Sinai (for the last time) on Yom Kippur, (the 10th of Tishrei) and he assembled the nation on the following day, the 11th of Tishrei, to instruct them about the construction of the Mishkan.

And it is written "And the People brought more donations in the morning (and) in the morning." The Midrash Rabbah elaborates: "Rabbi Yehudah and Rabbi Nechemiah said 'They brought (their) donations for two days, as it says: in the morning in the morning.'" And thus on the 14th (of Tishrei) they announced that they should not bring any more (donations).

So the construction of the Mishkan began on the 15th of Tishrei, and (immediately) the Presence of HaShem returned, and the Clouds (surrounded the Children of) Yisroel.

Thus HaShem commanded us to celebrate the festival of Succos on the 15th of

the Seventh Month (Tishrei), for (it was then that) we merited to dwell under the shelter (literally Wings) of the Presence of HaShem.

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PARASHAT EMOR  
SICHA OF HARAV YEHUDA AMITAL SHLIT"A

"Opening the Heart and the Mind"  
Summarized by Rav Eliyahu Blumenzweig

There is an apparent redundancy in the opening verse  
of

our parasha: "Say to the kohanim, the sons of Aharon, and you shall say to them..." (Vayikra 21:1). Rashi, based on the gemara, explains that the repetition comes "in order to warn the adults concerning the children."

The Midrash (Vayikra Raba 26:5) offers another understanding: "So it is with the angels, who have no yetzer ha-ra (evil inclination): it is sufficient to 'say to them' once... But humans, who have a yetzer ha-ra - if only it would be sufficient to 'say to them' twice!"

In the gemara quoted by Rashi, Chazal are teaching us the obligation of chinukh - the parents' responsibility to educate their children towards service of God. In contrast to the gemara, Chazal teach us in the midrash not that we are obligated in chinukh, but rather how to achieve our goal of chinukh. The need for two 'sayings' to which they refer is not simple repetition, but rather a way of conveying chinukh in such a way that each 'saying' has a different character and a different purpose.

When attempting to educate a person and mold his character, it is not sufficient to merely recite information and mention new concepts. Every person has his own individual attitudes and opinions and conceptual system, and when he hears new thoughts and opinions which don't coincide with his own, he will often fail to internalize what he has heard. Alternatively, he will twist what he has heard to fit into his own conceptual system, with the result that the same words uttered by the same person may be understood differently by each listener in light of each one's own perspective and according to his own views.

Influencing a person or molding his personality requires a 'first saying.' Not a 'saying' that aims to convey defined and quantified information, but rather a 'saying' that will open his heart, penetrate his thoughts and influence him to reveal his innermost self, in order that he will be prepared to hear and to accept, and to internalize what he is hearing.

This 'saying' cannot be quantified or clearly defined. Sometimes a person will have to keep listening to it for a long time before he feels genuinely ready and willing to hear and to accept. Upon reaching this point, it is quite possible that if he attempts to determine what he has heard until then, he will discover that he remembers nothing. He is unable to say exactly what he has been told and what has made an impression upon him, but nevertheless he feels ready to hear, and is eager to take in more.

In Chassidut much attention is paid to this 'first saying,' to the opening of the heart. A story is told of a chassid who returned from visiting his Rebbe and started to tell his friend all about the experience - how remarkable the Rebbe's words had been, and how excited he was by what he had heard. When his friend asked what the Rebbe had said, he replied: "As if one can understand the Rebbe!" The chassid didn't know what he had heard and hadn't understood anything, but his heart was open to hear more.

Only once the 'first saying' has succeeded is there place for the second, for the actual transfer of information and concepts. Only then, when the ideas find willing ears and an open heart, can they be accepted. It is then that the person

not only hears physically, but feels the words penetrate his very being, building him and developing his character.

Someone who wishes to educate and influence - or someone seeking to be educated and influenced - must understand the secret of these two 'sayings'.

If a person succeeds in taking in what he hears in such a

way that his very personality is influenced, then the message will carry quite naturally from him further. He will not need to influence anyone by forcing himself, his opinions or his thoughts on anyone else. Someone whose personality combines and reflects all his views and attitudes is readily understood by others in terms of his way of thinking, his morals and his world-view. These things emanate from him naturally, and that which emanates from the heart will undoubtedly find its way into the hearts of others, who are waiting to hear and to be built.

(Originally delivered on Leil Shabbat, Parashat Emor 5733.  
Translated by Kaeren Fish.)  
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Please pray for: Doniel Ben Chaya Malka, Yaakov Nachmael Ben Sora Dubba and Yehuda be Bail Rus. May Hashem send them a Refuah Shelaimah, a complete recovery.

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Sefiras HaOmer (Counting the Omer) by Reb Yosef Goldstein  
"You shall then count seven "PERFECT" weeks after the day following the (Passover) Holiday when you brought the Omer as an offering, until the day after the seventh week, when there will be a total of fifty days."  
(Vayikra / Leviticus 23:15)

Rabbi Chiya taught: "Seven perfect weeks" When will they be PERFECT

When the Jews do the will of G-D (Medrash Rabbah 28:3)  
One could ask regarding this Medrash as follows. Why does the mitzvah or commandment of "Sefirah", counting the Omer, depend on one's doing the will of Hashem/G-D more so than any other commandment? Why isn't the counting of the Omer by itself enough to make the seven weeks "perfect"?

There are two answers I would like to share with you.

The K'sav V'hakabala (Written by Rabbi Yaakov Tzvi Mecklenberg Rov of Koenigsberg) Explains the Medrash by first analyzing the exact wording of the verse and thru that analysis he shows that the words of the Medrash ARE the true meaning of the Posuk.

The K'sav V'hakabala's first question is: Why does the verse say, "count for yourselves ..." Why not say "Count on the day etc." What does G-d want to teach us by adding the extra word "lochem", for yourselves? He answers that it is to teach us that the commandment of counting the forty nine days between Pesach and Shavuot is NOT just to count the days. There is a higher purpose in counting those days, and that purpose is to elevate oneself and perfect oneself. (As he puts it, the purpose is not quantitative but qualitative.) To understand this he points out that all throughout the Torah whenever the term "for you" (LECHO) is used it connotes a purpose meant for you.

The first place we see this is in Parshas Lech Lecho where G-d told Avrohom "Go for yourself". Rashi explains, "for you, for your own good." I will give you children in Israel, but here you can not merit having children." The same thought can be applied to most verses where the word "Lecho" (for you) is used. There is no benefit for G-d in the performance of

the action, rather it is done ONLY for the person or because HE needs it done. Here too, the purpose in counting is not just to know when Shavuot is coming, but rather to use those days to refine and purify oneself. The word used for counting, VESOFARTO (and you should count), connotes more than just counting. It connotes study and supervision. We are enjoined to count the

days AND perfect ourselves. (Additionally SEFIRAH has the same root as SAPHIRE, a clear jewel. This is the time to "shine" and refine ourselves.

The Torah tells us to count seven "perfect" weeks. Rabbi Mecklenberg asks why does the aforementioned verse use the term "perfect", as opposed to the word "complete"? The seven weeks should be complete, a full forty-nine days. What does the Torah mean to tell us with the term perfect? With the Medrash we quoted earlier, AND according to Rabbi Mecklenberg's translation

of the beginning of the verse, we can understand the use of the word "perfect". If the entire purpose of counting is to perfect ourselves, and as Reb Chiya points out, they are not called "Perfect" unless we do the will of G-d, then everything is very clear. When we do the will of G-d, and we work on perfecting ourselves, then we have truly fulfilled the purpose of Counting the Omer, and the weeks can be called perfect.

Rabbi Yaakov Kranz, better known as the Dubno Maggid, gave the following explanation. Once there were two poor people who went from door to door collecting alms. They travelled together, begged together, and received

equal donations from every person who was kind enough to help them. However, one of the poor people was industrious, and he scrimped and saved every penny he received, and spent as little as possible. Every time he saved a few pennies, he changed it into a nickel, his nickels into dimes and so on until he had dollar bills in his pocket. The other poor person was not as disciplined as his friend and he was constantly spending the money he collected. He was never able to gather enough pennies to change into nickels or dimes since he was constantly spending his money.

The same contrast can be made between a "Tzaddik", a righteous man, and a "Rasha", an irresponsible person. A Tzaddik makes every day count. Every day is full of meaningful activities. Each day is connected to the other in continuation of their service to G-d. That service ties days together making them a week. The goals accomplished over four weeks turn into an month of meaningful effort. The accomplishments of twelve months translate into a year, and so on. However, an irresponsible person does not have that continuity. He lacks a goal which connects one day to another. The "Rasha" truly lives from day to day. All he has is the present day. All the past days are lost! There is no continuity between the present, and the days which have past.

The same concept can be applied to the counting of the Omer. G-d commanded us to count forty-nine days between Passover and Shavuot, because it was during that period of time that the Jews purified and elevated themselves in preparation for accepting the Torah on Mount Sinai. It is during this same period of time that WE are also encouraged to prepare ourselves and use this time to elevate ourselves in preparation for the Shavuot Holiday.

Therefore, just like the poor person who was able to take every single penny and combine it into a large sum of money, we are supposed to make use of every day of Counting the Omer to prepare for OUR acceptance and rededication to the Torah. We don't just "count" each day, we make each day "count". That is why the Medrash explains our period of counting can NOT be considered "perfect" UNLESS we do the will of G-d and we make proper use of our time during these weeks.

Thanks, Joe Goldstein Ext 444

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Volume III, Number 29 - Emor

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Please pray for the speedy healing of Esther Miriam bat Aliza Geula, Chaim Efraim Betzalel ben Malka, Sara Leah bat Shayna, Netanel Ben Chaya, Tzvi Yehuda Ben Chaya Esther, Yaakov Nachmael ben Sora Dubba, Yehuda ben BailaRus, Sarit bat Esther, Sara Leah bat Shayna and Rachel Tova bat Zipporah

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"They shall be holy before their L-rd, and they shall not desecrate the name of their L-rd, for the sacrifices of G-d, the bread of their L-rd do they bring, and they shall be holy." [21:6]

Having discussed last week the commandment for every Jew to be holy, we turn

in this parsha to the holiness of the Kohanim, the priests.

Given only a shallow understanding of the laws of Kohanim, we might consider

them a higher class, "creatures of privilege." When we had our Land and our Temple, all Jews gave the Kohanim a portion of their crops. Even the children of Levi (the tribe of the Kohanim), who also were given special portions, gave the Kohanim part of what they received. Only Kohanim could enter many parts of the Temple; only they could offer sacrifices; only they could aspire to the position of High Priest, he who performed the special service of Yom Kippur.

A closer examination of the details reveals that the situation is not so simple. The verse above describes the holiness of the Kohanim as not simply a fact, but a command - "they shall be holy," similar to "you shall be holy," the command to all Jews that we discussed last week. Rashi, Rabbi Shlomo Yitzhaki, further notes (according to the Sifsei Chachamim) that unlike the command of last week, this statement is said in the third person, as if there were a commandment upon others to make them holy.

His stunning conclusion: there is indeed such a command! "They shall be holy

- By force, the Bais Din [Jewish court] shall make them holy."

This refers to the commandments that precede the above verse. In general, a Kohen is not permitted to enter a building with a dead body, to carry it, or to approach a grave. A Kohen cannot even attend the funeral of his married sister, save from a distance. If he wants to go, the court pushes him away.

This is no minor matter: I recently heard that a liberal Rabbi "renounced his priesthood" in order to be able to perform funerals for congregants - the tradition provides no such opportunity.

Reading further, we learn that the Kohanim and Levites receive their designated presents - but unlike the rest of the nation of Israel, they did not receive individual parcels of land. Perhaps they were assured they would have a basic income, but the opportunity to amass individual wealth was greatly reduced. Note, by contrast, that the Catholic church was the largest landholder in Europe in the Middle Ages.

Frequently, we may look at other people, and be jealous. We wonder why this person was born wealthy, this one with a brilliant mind, this one with great looks. Others may also look at the Torah, and wonder why this group is different from that group, or why the Rabbis gave certain responsibilities to one group and not another.

The truth behind the distinctions of the Kohanim should teach us. Jewish thought does not tell us to seek fame and glory. Our lives are not about power and privilege. The Torah tells us that we are here to seek and to serve our G-d, through performance of Mitzvos and good deeds.

G-d gave us the Torah to assist us in our search. We need not wonder why some of us are Kohanim, some Levites, some Israelites, and why our tasks and

responsibilities are different - because just as each individual is different, what will help one person to grow could be harmful to another. And when we perform our tasks correctly, and succeed in our mission, then these outside distinctions do not determine who is considered truly worthy: "An ill-begotten scholar is preferable to an ignoramus priest." It is not how we were born that makes us - it is how we die.

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Good Shabbos, Rabbi Yaakov Menken  
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Torah Studies  
Adaptation of Likutei Sichos

by

Rabbi Dr. Jonathan Sacks  
Chief Rabbi of Great Britain

Based on the teachings and talks of the Lubavitcher Rebbe  
Rabbi Menachem M. Schneerson on the weekly Torah Portion

#### EMOR

An historic controversy arose between the Rabbis and sectarians as to the meaning of the command of counting the Omer.

"And you shall count unto you from the morrow after the Shabbat." The Rabbis understood Shabbat to mean Pesach (i.e., "the day of rest"). The sectarians took it to mean, literally, the seventh day, and so they always began their counting on a Sunday. Although the Rabbis proved their case, why did the Torah use a word so open to misinterpretation?

In answering this question, the Rebbe's teaching branches out into a detailed study of the three stages from the Exodus from Egypt to the Giving of the Torah on Sinai, both as they occurred historically and as they recur daily in the life of the individual.

#### THE DAY AFTER

In Emor, the commandment of counting the Omer is stated: "And you shall count unto you from the morrow after the day of rest ('Shabbat'), from the day that you brought the sheaf ('Omer') of the waving; there shall be seven complete weeks."

The Talmud tells us that the sect of the Boethusians interpreted the word Shabbat to mean the seventh day, rather than the "day of rest" of Pesach. As a consequence they held that the counting of the Omer always begins on a Sunday.

There was considerable debate, during which the Rabbis brought many scriptural proofs to establish that the Boethusian interpretation was false. But a persistent question remains: Why did the Torah leave room for this error, instead of stating explicitly, "on the day after the Pesach?"

#### THREE MONTHS

In the Sidra of Shemot, G-d tells Moses, "When you have brought the people out of Egypt, you shall serve G-d upon this mountain." In other words, the purpose of the Exodus from Egypt lay in the Giving of the Torah. Between these two events, the Exodus and the Revelation on Sinai came

the seven weeks of the Omer. These seven weeks were the necessary transition between the start and the completion of redemption.

Three months were involved in this process: Nissan, in which the Exodus took place; Iyar, which is wholly taken up with the counting of the Omer; and Sivan, in which the Torah was given. Only these three are explicitly mentioned in the context of the redemption.

Of Nissan it is written: "the month of Spring, ... in it you came out

of Egypt." Of Iyar we find, "the second month ... after they had come out of the land of Egypt." And of Sivan, "In the third month after the Children of Israel were gone forth out of the land of Egypt." All three are mentioned because each was an integral part of the redemption.

#### Three Kinds of Food

Of these three, Pesach is linked to the eating of Matzah. The Omer was a measure of barley. And Shavuot has a special offering of two loaves, of fine flour baked with leaven. This presents a number of difficulties. Only two meal offerings did not consist of wheat: The Omer, and the offering of a wife suspected of infidelity. Both of these were of barley.

In the latter case the Talmud gives a reason: Her offering was to be of animal food as a humiliation for her immorality. But why was the Omer of animal food?

On Pesach we are forbidden to eat leaven, because leaven symbolizes man's inclination to pride and self-esteem. As leaven raises the dough, so pride inflates a man to arrogance. But why, in that case, are we allowed to eat leaven the rest of the year, and indeed obliged (in the Temple) to do so on Shavuot.

#### "DRAW ME; WE WILL RUN AFTER YOU"

In the Song of Songs, there is a verse, "Draw me, we will run after you; the king has brought me into his chambers."

Each of these three phrases refers to one of the three stages of the departure from Egypt. "Draw me" is the Exodus.

"We will run after you" is the counting of the Omer.

"The king has brought me into his chambers" is the Giving of the Torah. "Draw me" is passive - it refers to the Israelites being taken out by G-d. Also it is singular. Whereas "We will run after you" is both active and plural.

By the end of their enslavement, the Israelites were assimilated into the heathen ways of their captors. They were not deserving of redemption. They had to be seized and drawn out of their captivity by the initiative of G-d. Since they were not inwardly prepared for it, this unexpected revelation did not alter them inwardly. They were taken hold of by G-d rather than by the promptings of their heart. And although their "G-dly soul" responded, their "animal soul" was unchanged. One part of their being received the revelation, but the other, the capacity for evil, remained.

Indeed, this is why, as the Alter Rebbe explains, the Israelites fled from Egypt. What they were running from was the evil within themselves.

So we can understand the phrase "Draw me." Firstly, when we take possession of an object by seizing hold of it, nothing is changed in the subject itself; it merely changes hands: In this case, from Israel's being in the hand of Pharaoh to their being in the hand of G-d. Israel in itself was unchanged.

Secondly, it was passive. The drawing out of Egypt was achieved by the hand of Heaven, not by any spontaneous act on the part of the Israelites. Thirdly, it was singular. The revelation of this sudden intervention of G-d affected only one side of their being. Their spirit responded; their physical passions did not.

#### INTELLECT AND PASSION

For all this, the purpose of a revelation is that the spirit should change the physical nature of man as well. If man were meant to be pure spirit, he would not have needed a body. The point of a religious life within the world is to bring every side of human nature into G-d's work: " 'And you shall love the L-rd your G-d with all your heart' - this means, with both your inclinations."

This interplay not only elevates the physical side of man, but also his spiritual life, by adding to it the drive and energy of physical passion. Man as an intellectual being is dispassionate: His emotions and desires are mitigated by the rational control he exercises over them. But animal energy, be it literally in an animal or in the instinctual drives of man, is unchecked, powerful. As our sages say "There is much increase by the strength of an ox." When the animal in man is no longer at war with his spirit, but is sublimated to it, all its passionate intensity is

transferred to the life of holiness.

This is why the Omer was of barley, animal food. Because this was the labor of that period, to transform the "animal soul" of the Israelites, which had remained unaffected by the initial revelation in Egypt. How is this done? By meditation. Meditation on the nature of G-d awakens love and fear. At first, when one knows that rebellion, pride, animal obstinacy, is still a power within oneself, one must "flee" from it.

This is the time of suppression. But once one has left the "Egypt" of temptation, there comes a time of meditation and sublimation, when the two sides of man no longer battle for possession, and when the spirit rules, and physical nature transfers its energy.

Thus Solomon wrote, "We will run after you." We will run, because our service is quickened by this new source of energy. We will run, because it is we, not G-d, who take the religious initiative. And "We," in the plural, because both sides of our nature are caught up in this effort of reaching out towards G-d, and each gives impetus to the other.

#### THE FINAL STAGE

There is still a further stage. At the Exodus, there was the Divine call. During the Omer, there was man's response. But at the Giving of the Torah, there was the final abnegation of man in the face of G-d. While, for forty-nine days, he was transforming himself, he was still a self, still using his powers and relying on himself. But at Sinai, in the face of G-d, "with every single word that went forth from the mouth of the Holy One, blessed be He, the souls of Israel departed." They were empty: The only reality was G-d.

Thus it is that on Pesach we may not eat leaven. At the outset, when pride and fulfillment preserve their power, they must be suppressed, set aside. They cannot be combated rationally, for they can subvert the mind: "They are wise to do evil."

At the stage of the Omer, we use our understanding to redirect our emotions. We use the leaven in ourselves to change ourselves. And when, at the point of Shavuot, we reach the final openness of all our being to G-d, then we are obliged to use the leaven, making every part of our nature into a channel for the light of G-d.

#### EVERY DAY

The Rabbis said, "In every generation, and every day, a man is obliged to see himself as if he had gone out of Egypt that very day." So each of the three stages of the exodus are components of the task of every day.

In the beginning of our prayers we say, "I give acknowledgment before

#### MESSAGE FROM THE HAFTORAH PARSHAS EMOR Yechezkel 44:15

This week's haftorah projects to us the service of the kohanim (priests) in the Messianic Era. The prophet Yechezkel draws our attention to the priestly garb of the kohanim and their specific regulations. He speaks about the kohanim's restrictions from drinking wine and shaving their head and makes mention of their prohibition to marry certain women. At first glance these details seem to be a perfect repetition of those in our sidra.

However a more careful look reveals to us a shocking dimension about the era

of Mashiach and the elevated status of the kohanim during those times. In essence it seems that the ordinary kohanim in the time of Mashiach will parallel the Kohain Gadol (High Priest) of earlier times. (See the comments of the Radak, Abravanel and Malbim throughout the haftorah.) The kohain of

the future will have similar restrictions and regulations to those of the Kohain Gadol as set forth in this week's sidra. The overall status of the Jewish people will be elevated to such a magnitude that even the ordinary kohain will assume levels of purity and sanctity equal to the most dignified and sanctified person of earlier times.

you . . ." (the Modeh Ani prayer). This is the acknowledgment, the surrender to G-d, that precedes understanding. It is the Nissan of the day, the individual exodus.

There then follow the Psalms of Praise (Pesukei Dezimrah) and the Shema and its benedictions. These are the prayers of meditation, and understanding. "Hear, O Israel," the first phrase of the Shema, means "understand."

And through this meditation, the emotions are awakened, and the love of G-d is aroused with "all your heart and all your soul and all your might." This is the daily equivalent of the month of Iyar and the counting of the Omer.

But, so far, this represents only the battle against half, the "animal" half, of one's nature (bittul ha-yesh). There still awaits the final extinction of self-consciousness (bittul bi-metziut) which comes during the Amidah prayer, when "like a slave before his master" we have no self with which to speak. We are empty of words. We say, "O L-rd, open my lips." And this is the Sivan of the day, the moment when we confront - like the Israelites at Sinai - the all-possessing presence of G-d.

#### AFTER THE SHABBAT

Now, finally, we realize why the Torah, in the verse quoted at the outset, says, "On the morrow after the Shabbat" instead of "... after the Pesach."

To achieve the transformation of the "animal soul" demands the deepest reserves of spiritual energy. To have brought the Israelites out of their entrenched impurity needed more than an "angel" - an emissary - it needed G-d himself in His Glory and Essence. If this was true of the escape from evil, it is more so for the transformation of evil into good. It would need a spiritual source able to enter into the heart of evil without being affected.

Shabbat is a source of intense spirituality. It is the apex of the week. But it still belongs to the week, and thus to time and the finite.

"The morrow after the Shabbat" refers to the step beyond Shabbat, beyond time itself: A revelation higher than the world.

To count the forty-nine days of Omer, that is, to transform into holiness every emotion that we feed, we must rest our efforts on the "morrow after the Shabbat" - the light of G-d from beyond the world.

(Source: Likkutei Sichot, Vol. I, pp. 265-270)

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It is for this reason that the prophet draws our focus to the priestly garb. He restricts their garb while serving in the Bais Hamikdash to be those made exclusively of linen rather than the customary complex woolen structure of earlier times. In addition he forbids them from walking outside of the Bais Hamikdash with their priestly garb thereby restricting any mundane contact to the garb. Unlike the general freedom allowed to the earlier kohanim, those in the Messianic era will be restricted to the very specific hair length of the Kohain Gadol - not too long and not too short. The kohanim will even be forbidden to marry a widow, and permitted to marry only a virgin. All of these regulations render the future kohanim tantamount to the earlier Kohain Gadol. In fact, many of these specifications had been previously reserved for the Kohain Gadol during his elevated Yom Kippur service. The conclusion we draw from all this is that even daily Temple service in the Messianic era will be on par with the Yom Kippur service of earlier generations. The earlier experience of the Kohain Gadol on the holiest of all days while performing his service in the Holy of Holies will eventually become commonplace in the times of Mashiach.

In order to appreciate and digest this overwhelming discovery it is important to understand the inner workings of the Kohain Gadol. In this week's sidra, the Torah gives us the reason for the elevated status of the Kohain Gadol. After listing his specific restrictions the Torah states (Vayikra 21:12) "And he should not leave the Mikdash so as not to profane the sanctity of Hashem because the crown of Hashem is upon the Kohain

Gadol's head." The Sefer HaChinuch (Mitzva 270) explains to us this concept of "the crown of Hashem". He reflects the opinion of the Rambam (see Hilchos Klei Hamikdash 5:7) that the Kohain Gadol was required to remain in his designated chamber in the Bais Hamikdash throughout the entire day of service. In addition the Rambam notes that the nightly living quarters of the Kohain Gadol were restricted to Yerushalayim proper and he was actually forbidden under all circumstances to leave the Holy City. This constant and indescribable focus on Hashem and His service produced the supreme sanctity of the Kohain Gadol. The Chinuch says, "Although the Kohain Gadol was human he was designated to be holy of holies. His soul dwelled amongst the angels for his soul cleaved to Hashem and the Kohain Gadol was totally detached from mundane interests and concerns." The Chinuch views the elevated status of the Kohain Gadol's sanctity as a product of his total immersion in the service of Hashem. His perfect surroundings together with his constant focus on the sacrifices and his continuous awareness of the presence of Hashem produced the holiest man on earth. The Kohain Gadol's elevated life-style was restricted to one of perfect sanctity because his entire interest and focus was reserved to purity and sanctity.

We can now begin to absorb the sanctity of the ordinary kohain during the Messianic era. In general the focus of the entire world will be one of sanctity. The prophet Yeshaya (11:9) speaks of the illustrious era of Mashiach in the following terms, "And the land will be filled with the knowledge of Hashem." The Rambam (Hilchos M'lochim 12:5) elaborates upon this and states, "And in this time there will be no jealousy or quarrel... and the preoccupation of all will be 'to know Hashem'...and the Jewish people will be great scholars who will understand Hashem to the maximum human capacity." It stands to reason that if this will be the elevated level of the ordinary Jew, how much greater will be the level of the kohain who is privileged to serve Hashem in His presence?! Their indescribable understanding of Hashem together with their direct and constant contact with Hashem will truly yield the sanctity of "Holy of Holies" tantamount to the earlier Kohain Gadol who shared this similar status once a year on the holiest of all days, Yom Kippur. May we soon merit these elevated levels of sanctity, so sorely needed in our times.

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emor

Shiur HaRav Soloveichik ZTL on Parshas Emor

The Rav analyzed the connection between the various topics covered in Parshas Emor: the sanctity and special status of the Kohanim, the section detailing the festivals and the Lechem Hapanim and Ner Tamid requirements at the end of the Parsha.

Parshas Emor begins with a description of the restrictions applied to the Kohanim that are intended to ensure their sanctity. They are enjoined from situations that would defile them.

They may only attend funerals for their 7 immediate family members and may marry women with appropriate qualifications. After a description of disabilities that disqualify a Kohen from participating in the Temple service, the Torah describes the festivals followed by the requirements and placement of the Menora and the Lechem Hapanim within the Mishkan.

The Rav explained the connection between the sanctity of the Kohanim and the details of the festivals in the Parsha.

There is a Halacha Lemoshe M'sinai that the members of the Sanhedrin are responsible for the sanctification of the months and the festivals that correspond with the months. In fact the Rambam says that even though a smaller group (of 3, 5, 7) may constitute a body that may sanctify the new moon, the smaller groups still receive their authority from the larger Sanhedrin.

Who were the members of the Sanhedrin? A significant part of the Sanhedrin consisted of the Kohanim and Shevet Levi. As the Torah says that when there will be a matter to be judged you should go up to the place that Hashem shall choose and you shall appear before the Kohanim and Leviim...(Devarim 17:8-9). Indeed their main responsibility was to function as the teachers and judges of Bnai Yisrael. This role as the teachers of Bnai Yisrael (to be a "lamdan") was more critical than their role in the sacrifices in the Temple. Teaching was their full time responsibility as compared to temple service which was divided among the Kohanim and done by each Kohen for a short period each year. They must play a central role in the Mikra Kodesh, in the process that sanctifies the new month and the associated festivals.

The Haftorah for Emor shows this connection between the Kohen and the process for sanctifying the months. The Navi speaks about the Kohanim as the keepers of the festivals and the sanctifiers of the Sabbath. While the festivals have been sanctified by Bnai Yisrael (Mkadesh Yisrael V'hazmanim), Shabbos has been sanctified by Hashem from the beginning of time (Kedushasa Teluya Vomedes). The Navi says that in the days of Moshiach and the third Beis Hamikdash. not only will the Sanhedrin and the Kohanim sanctify the months, but Shabbos as well. As part of the overall role of the Kohen he will be the central point for the service in the Beis Hamikdash, for sanctification of the festivals and for those searching for Torah knowledge: Ki Sifsei Kohen Yishmaru daas Vtorah Yvakshu Mpiyhu (Malachi 2:7). This notion is brought out in the Haftoras Emor (Exekiel 44).

The Rav explained the connection between the Menorah/Shulchan (Lechem Hapanim) and the parsha. The Rav quoted the Ibn Ezra (Shemos 25:22) in Parshas Terumah who asks why wasn't the incense altar mentioned after the Shulchan and the Menorah? The Ibn Ezra answers that Ki Lo Hakavod

Yamush etc., which the Rav explained as follows: The glory of Hashem is all encompassing, yet the Mishkan provided two functions: 1) the place for bringing sacrifices and 2) the place for Hashem, K'vayachol, to dwell among B'nei Yisrael. The mitzva of Hachnasas Orchim includes the provision of the fundamental comforts for the guest. These include a chair, a light and a table. B'nei Yisrael needed to provide the basics to their invited guest, Hashem. The incense altar was not included as part of the basic necessities.

This same idea can be seen with the story of the Shunamite woman who wanted Elisha the Prophet to stay at her home and who provided him a room with a bed, chair, table and candelabra (Melachim 2, 4:10). The same basic facilities were provided in the Mishkan.

The Aron and Kapores served as the bed and chair while the Shulchan and Menora were the table and candelabra.

The Rav asked why was Aharon commanded with the specific location at which to light the Menora, M'chutz

L'paroches H'aydus... Lif'nei Hashem Tamid?

Why not simply say that there is an obligation to light the Menora in the Mishkan? Why does the Torah use similar language of continuity (from Shabbos to Shabbos) regarding the arrangement of the Lechem Hapanim on the Shulchan?

The Rav explained that these sections of the Parsha specifically mention the Paroches H'aydus, Menora and Shulchan as all 3 comprised the basic provisions of bed, chair, table and candelabra that are included in Hachnasas Orchim. It was the responsibility of the Kohen to ensure that these items were provided for.

In summary, the Parsha revolves around the sanctity of the Kohen, his special role in the sanctification of the months and festivals in keeping with his dual role of Avodah in the Mikdash and teaching Torah to B'nei Yisrael and their obligation to ensure that the Mikdash provides the basics of Hachnasas Orchim for Hashem.

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