

INTERNET PARSHA SHEET
ON PARSHAS EMOR - 5757

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Shiur HaRav Soloveichik ZT"L on Parshas Emor (shiur date:
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The Torah commands us to bring the Shtay Halechem on Shavuos, and says that this offering is supposed to consist of Chametz. The Shtei Halechem was different from other Menachos in that it alone consisted of Chametz. The Rav explained why the Ramban was apparently bothered by this difference and how the Ramban explained the unique nature of the Shtei Halechem.

The Ramban states that the Shtei Halechem is first and foremost a Korban Todah, offer of thanksgiving to Hashem for the harvest that has just been completed. In fact the Korban Omer is also an offer of thanksgiving, as we bring it from the newly grown barley, as a general thanksgiving on behalf of Bnay Yisrael for the harvest. The Shtei Halechem, like other Korbanos Todah, consists of Chametz.

The Ramban explains that the word Chametz suggests Midas Hadin, the strict attribute of judgement by Hashem. The term Chametz is used in connection with things that have soured and gone bad, for example wine that has gone sour, Chometz Yayin. Midas Hadin requires immediate retribution for the sour deed done by the individual. That Hashem accepts our Korbanos and grants us forgiveness is evidence of the Midas Hachessed of Hashem. For if Hashem operated with us under the strict Midas Hadin, the person would have to offer himself as the very sacrifice to atone for his sin. It is only through the Chesed of Hashem that we can bring Korbanos in lieu of our personal debt. (The Rav noted that Hashem is referred to as Elokim (denoting the Midas Hadin) when He commands Avraham to bring Isaac as a sacrifice. It is only after Avraham comes as close as possible to fulfilling the command that the ram becomes the sacrifice, and the Midas Hadin is transformed into the Midas Hachessed (and Hashem is referred to by that name).)

The Ramban then says that it is the desire of Hashem that Korbanos should not include anything that symbolizes Midas Hadin. Rather, Hashem wants the Korbanos to consist of items that represent the interweaving of Midas Hachessed in the world, similar to the way in which He created the world. That is why Chametz, which is symbolic of sin and strict Midas Hadin is not usually included with Korbanos. The Rav explained this through the following analogy. We recite the Bircas Hagomel when Hashem saves us from misfortune, thanking Hashem for granting favors to those that are guilty for He has granted me all favors. Why do we add the statement that Hashem grants favors to the guilty? Why not simply thank Him for granting me a favor? Because if Hashem operated through a strict enforcement of Midas Hadin, the guilty would not be spared. It is only because of the kindness of Hashem, who at the the time of creation blended Midas Hachessed with Midas Hadin, that we are saved. Chametz, Midas Hadin, as part of the Korban Todah, would argue against man being granted this Chesed from Hashem. When Hashem grants us Chesed even in situations that we are not deserving of it, we must recognize and acknowledge another example of how Hashem blended Chesed with Din.

Man should not think that he he has been shown kindness by erroneously believing that he lives in a world of complete Din, and he has been saved because he was judged to be deserving based on his merits. The Korban Todah consists of Chametz to remind us that it is only through the Chesed of Hashem that our sour ways have been overlooked. We show that Din and

The Ramban says that on Shavuos, the time of Mattan Torah, we bring this Korban Todah, Bdin Torah, because it is the day of Atzeres, Vhamaskil Yavin (The Rav noted, in only half jest, that one must be concerned when the Ramban uses this term...). The Rav explained that Torah Shebichtav represents the strict Midas Hadin, as it clearly states the punishment for each transgression, as well as the definitions of guilt and innocence. Torah Shebeal Peh, on the other hand, represents the Midas Hachessed Vrachamim. Torah Shebichtav was given on Shavuos while Torah Shebeal Peh was given on Yom Kippur. Shavuos, with its connection to Torah Shebichtav and absolute Din, requires a Korban of Chametz which represents Din. Our task on Shavuos is to sweeten the absolute Midas Hadin, of Torah Shebichtav, with the aspect of Rachamim, as represented by Torah Shebeal Peh. Blending Torah Shebeal Peh with Torah Shebichtav on Shavuos is yet another example of how we recognize the greatness of Hashem for creating the world through a combination of Chesed and Din. Torah Shebeal Peh allows us to transform the strict Midas Hadin of Torah Shebichtav, as symbolized by the Chametz in the Shtei Halechem, into Midas Harachamim.

This is why, according to Kaballah, we stay up Shavuos night and learn Torah Shebichtav followed by Torah Shebeal Peh. We begin with Torah Shebichtav, represented by the Chametz of the Shtei Halechem, but we must intermix Torah Shebeal Peh, in order to sweeten the absolute Din with Chesed. By the morning when we get to the Krias Hatorah of Kabbalas Hatorah (Midas Hadin and Torah Shebichtav), we have already sweetened the Midas Hadin through our study of Torah Shebeal Peh during the night. The Ramban is hinting that Shavuos symbolizes Midas Hadin, and the Korban of Chametz that is brought on Shavuos reenforces that symbolism. (On Hoshanah Rabbah we have the custom to learn Torah Shebichtav alone. The Aravah symbolizes the sweetening of the Midas Hadin, Torah Shebichtav. There is no need to mix in Torah Shebeal Peh also.)

The Ramban notes that according to Chazal, the Korban Todah will never be nullified because the it represents the blending of Rachamim and Din, without which the world could not exist.

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Shiur HaRav Soloveichik ZT"L 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 Bnay Yisrael. This role as the teachers of Bnay 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 Bnay 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 Bnay 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. Bnay 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, Mchut Laparoches H'aydus... Lifnay 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 Bnay Yisrael and their obligation to ensure that the Mikdash provides the basics of Hachnasas Orchim for Hashem.

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call himself a Jew? Should we go as far as to say that a Christian born to Jewish parents is Jewish regardless of his or her own commitments? Our Torah portion of Emor deals mainly with the priesthood, emphasizing the fact that priests - responsible for the preservation of Jewish life and community - are forbidden from all contact with the dead. However, when it comes to the priest's own parents, such contact is permitted. What makes this passage strange is that the Torah explicitly forbids an individual who becomes a nazir (one who vows not to cut his hair, drink wine or come into contact with the dead) from defiling himself for anyone (Num. 6:7).

Given that the sanctity of the nazir is more lenient than that of the priest since it is only temporary, logic would dictate that if the nazir is forbidden from contact with his dead parents, the priest ought certainly be similarly forbidden!

The Sochaczower Rebbe (Rabbi Avraham Bornstein, 1839-1910) answers that the key lies in the respective sources of sanctity. The nazir derives his sanctity from a vow which he chose to make; the priest, on the other hand, achieved his sanctity by virtue of his birth. Since the priest's sanctity comes as a result of his parents, there can be no limits placed on the respect he accords them. What is true of the priest is true for all of Israel. Just as the sanctity of the priest derives from his parents, our Jewishness stems from the fact that we were born from Jewish mothers, are descendants of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, Sarah, Rebecca, Leah and Rachel, and are continuing the golden chain which is based upon a lifestyle transmitted from parent to child since Sinai. Our Sages teach that "Jews by choice" become metaphysical descendants of the patriarchs and matriarchs, literally "born again" at the time of their conversion.

Several years back, coinciding with Holocaust Memorial Day, Tel Aviv University invited Cardinal Jean Marie Lustiger - an individual who was saved from Auschwitz at the age of 14 by the Catholic Church - to address an international conference on "The Silence of God during the Holocaust."

One of the most outspoken critics of the choice of speaker was the chief rabbi of Israel, Rav Yisrael Meir Lau, who argued that it was the height of insensitivity to invite a Jewish apostate to address a conference on Holocaust Memorial Day. The chief rabbi was not condemning the cardinal *per se*. No one has the right to judge a tinok she-nishba (a child held captive), and even the most stringent view would not hold him culpable for having joined the Church to survive, or in gratitude for his rescue. But the state of Israel is rooted in symbolism, and selecting a Christian cleric - even one born to Jewish parents - as a spokesman for the Holocaust was seen by many Jews as sacrilegious, and even blasphemous to the memory of the six million martyrs.

Cardinal Lustiger accepted the invitation with alacrity. "It is a fit privilege for me to speak in Israel on Yom HaShoah. After all, virtually my entire family perished in the Holocaust, and I consider myself no less a Jew than my parents and grandparents," he declared in a television interview.

The response to - and antithesis of - the cardinal (lehavdil elef havdalot) is Reb Moshe Haim Tiefenbrunn, one of my most beloved congregants. He too is a Holocaust survivor, but his story is very different from the cardinal's. With the outbreak of war, he thought he was protecting his family members by sending them to a small town in Galicia, Poland; attempting to escape conscription, he himself then fled to Shanghai.

At the end of the war, Reb Moshe Haim received a telegram from a cousin in (then) Palestine reporting that the entire family was alive. Bursting with gratitude, Reb Moshe Haim prepared a lavish kiddush for all his friends.

Less than a month later, he was called in by the rabbi, who had just received official notification that the entire Tiefenbrunn family had actually perished; the cousin had emerged from the camps mentally deranged.

When Reb Moshe Chaim left the rabbi, the disappointment, frustration and anger he felt was beyond tears. He believed he could never smile again, never pray again. If this is what could happen in God's world, he told himself, then there is no Judge and there is no judgment. He removed his kippa (skullcap) and threw it to the ground. But then he took two steps backwards. After all, he wondered, where was his father's kippa when they killed him? And so he came to ask himself the most fateful question of his life: what value was there to the lives of his parents and

SHABBAT SHALOM: A true survivor

By RABBI SHLOMO RISKIN

(May 15) "And God said to Moses: 'Speak to the priests, the sons of Aaron, and tell them none shall be defiled for the dead among his people: but for his kin that is near to him, for his mother, and for his father...' " (Lev. 21:1-1)

WE'VE just been through the part of the year which reflects the most monumental events of our century - Holocaust Memorial Day, Remembrance Day for Israel's Fallen and Israeli Independence Day. And inevitably, we are reminded that questions of Jewish identity are complex. Who has the right to

grandparents if he now threw away everything they believed in and died for?

With tears coursing down his cheeks, he kissed the fallen kippa and replaced it on his head. He understood that, if for no other reason than to affirm the value of the lives and ideals of his ancestors, he must continue to live as a totally religious Jew. I can personally testify to the commitment of Reb Moshe Haim, and he has been privileged, with his wonderful wife Deborah, to support many synagogues and Torah institutions while raising a family that would have made his parents and grandparents proud. When all is said and done, Reb Moshe Haim Teifenbrunn represents the sanctity of Israel in its most profound sense. Shabbat Shalom Rabbi Riskin, dean of the Ohr Tora institutions, is chief rabbi of Efrat.

TORAH WEEKLY Ohr Somayach International* Highlights of the Weekly Torah Portion Parshas Emor Insights Bored With Breathing "And you will bring a new 'mincha' offering (meal offering) to Hashem." (23:16) Are you 'burned out'? You seem to hear that phrase a lot these days. I'm 'burned out' from this; I'm 'burned out' from that; I'm bored with this; It's just lost its excitement for me. Why do people 'burn out'?

Take two people working hard. One self-employed, the other working for a salary. There's a big difference between them. Someone who works for a salary has no particular interest in the company, except that it provides him with a living. And his apathy only increases if the company doesn't do well and there is no bonus to look forward to. Someone who is self-employed, on the other hand, puts his very soul into his work. He is the company. He enjoys the moments of triumph and he grieves over the disasters, but bored and burned out? Never. Unlike the salaried employee whose remuneration is fixed from the beginning with only limited scope for profit participation, the self-employed person knows that the sky's the limit. The company's success is his success. When we learn Torah we should think of it like it was our own business. In your own business, if things aren't going right, who is there to put them right? Only yourself. If it takes extra time at the office, we would certainly, and gladly, put in the extra hours. When we sit down to learn, do we mentally 'punch in'? Are we waiting for the next coffee break? For the check at the end of the month? Or do we feel the exuberance and challenge of our learning as though it was our own business?

How does the Torah refer to the monumental event of its being given at Sinai? "And you will bring a new 'mincha' offering to Hashem." Why is the reference so oblique? It's true that at the festival of Shavuot we do bring a new mincha offering to Hashem. But is that the most conspicuous aspect of Shavuot? How about the giving of the Torah? Wouldn't it have been more appropriate to spell out that on this day the Torah was given at Sinai? And yet it is with these few covert words that the Torah hints to the central event of Judaism. Why? The Torah doesn't specify the date of its giving because it doesn't want us to feel that it was given as a 'one-off' event. Rather, it wants us to feel like it's being given to us every day, and for us to receive it every day as though we were hearing it for the first time at Sinai. The Torah is our life's breath. Even though a person breathes millions of times in the course of his life, does anyone get tired of breathing? Why not? Because we understand that our life depends on breathing, it's not a subject for boredom. Boredom can only set in when a person sees something as optional. Breathing isn't optional; it's obligatory.

This is the way we should feel about the Torah, for it is our life and the length of our days. Kli Yakar, Moser Derech, Rabbi Simcha Wasserman Written and Compiled by Rabbi Yaakov Asher Sinclair General Editor: Rabbi Moshe Newman Production Design: Lev (C) 1997 Ohr Somayach International

Shirumim by Rav Mordechai Elon EMOR

This Shiur was delivered in Bar Ilan in 5754.

Parshat Emor speaks at length about all the Jewish holidays, beginning

with Shabbat and going through the entire cycle of the Jewish year. Two long sections discuss the concepts and Halachot of Omer, which is part of the Jewish holiday cycle, connecting Pesach and Shavuot. The Omer is also mentioned not only in relation to the counting, but also in the actual sacrifice of the Omer (HANAFAT HA-OMER), which permits the Chadash (new crops of that year) to be eaten. The counting begins on the day that the Omer sacrifice is brought, which is "on the day after the Sabbath" (Leviticus 23:11), the 16th of Nisan. There is a famous dispute between the Perushim and the Baytusim, whether "the day after" refers to the day after Shabbat as mentioned in Genesis i.e. Sunday (Baytusim), or if it refers to the day after the first day of Pesach (Perushim) (Menachot 65a). We will later show how this Talmudic argument is the basis of understanding the Mitzvah (according to the Rambam), which few people pay attention to. The Mitzvah of the Omer Sacrifice (cutting, bringing and waving) will be the focus of this Shiur, as the other Mitzvah of Omer, the counting, has been discussed previously (see Digest to Parshat Bishalach and Parshat Parah).

THE UNIQUENESS OF THE OMER SACRIFICE

The Mitzvah of Omer is unique in that right in the middle of the Torah portion that discusses the Jewish holidays, this Mitzvah about a sacrifice is mentioned. First the holiday of Pesach (as the next to last holiday in the cycle) is described. Following this, instead of the expected discussion of Shavuot, there appears the following strange verse: "Speak to the people of Israel, and say to them, WHEN YOU COME TO THE LAND which I give to you, and shall reap its harvest, then you shall bring a sheaf of the first fruits of your harvest to the priest" (Leviticus 23:10). The reference to coming into the land is not at all related to the series of verses describing each holiday. Entering the land is a pre-condition in the Torah of many Mitzvot, such as the destruction of Amalek, appointing a king, or building the Beit Hamikdash. But as we approach the final holiday of Shavuot, this reference to coming into the land and then the cutting of the Omer seems odd. Even when referring to agricultural Mitzvot such as Peah, Leket (Leviticus 19:9-10) and Shikcha (Deuteronomy 24:19), there is no pre-condition of first coming into the land.

Many Midrashim ask this question. One Midrash (Vayikra Rabbah 28:4) sees in this reference to the land that the Mitzvah of Omer is very important vis a vis the land itself. It is because of the Mitzvah, says the Midrash, that the Jewish people inherit the land. But is this possible -- wasn't the inheritance promised to Avraham? Therefore, the Midrash means to say that the Jews retain the land and continue to live in it only because of the Mitzvah of Omer. Since this phrase "when you come to the land" is out of place, this then shows a connection between the keeping of this particular Mitzvah of Omer and keeping the land. The Midrash later continues and says that because of the Mitzvah of Omer, Gidon, the judge, was victorious in battle, Chezkiah was victorious, Haman was defeated in the Purim story and other seemingly non-related events in Jewish history occurred. We can understand the textual basis for this Midrash, since "coming into the land" is not appropriate here. But what is the underlying idea that the Midrash found to raise this particular Mitzvah to the status of inheriting the land in the merit of its performance? And why the special connection to other victories in Jewish history as well?

Since we do not bring the Omer sacrifice today, the procedure is not that well known. Therefore, as we analyze the verses, we shall learn the Rambam who describes the Omer ceremony in detail. The verses read: "Speak to the people of Israel, and say to them, When you come to the land WHICH I GIVE TO YOU, and shall reap its harvest, then you shall bring a sheaf of the first fruits of your harvest to the priest. And he shall WAVE the sheaf before the Lord, to be accepted for you; on the next day after the Sabbath the priest shall WAVE it. And you shall offer that day when you WAVE the sheaf a male lamb without blemish of the first year for a burnt offering to the Lord. And the meal offering of it shall be two tenth deals of fine flour mixed with oil, an offering made by fire to the Lord for a sweet savor; and the drink offering of it shall be of wine, the fourth part of a hin. And you shall eat nor bread, nor parched grain, nor green ears, until the same day that you have brought an offering to your God; it shall be a statute forever through out your

generations in all your dwellings" (Leviticus 23:10-14). God is not speaking to the generation who entered the land 39 years later, and yet He says "WHICH I GIVE TO YOU" in present tense. Then, again and again, the Torah shows how this sacrifice is different from other sacrifices in that it must be lifted up and waved (MUNAF). The act of lifting up and waving is only done with the Omer sacrifice and the Two Loaves of Shavuot, which were brought at the end of the Omer period. Another way in which the Omer is unique is that only after the Omer was brought could the new crop of grain be eaten. In Halachik terms, the Omer was MATTIR (rendered permitted) the CHODOSH (new grain from that year).

After these verses, it says "And you shall count from the next day after the Sabbath, from the day that you brought the sheaf of the (OMER HATENUFA)WAVE OFFERING; seven Sabbaths shall be complete" (Leviticus 23:15). It is interesting that the name of the sacrifice is called by the lifting up and waving. Not only does this sacrifice have a unique property of waving and lifting up, but it is named for this unique property. We will see later in the Shiur why this is significant.

THE "NAFKA MINA" IN THE ARGUMENT ABOUT THE OMER

The argument between the Baytusim and Perushim is if the day after the Sabbath refers to Sunday or the second day of Pesach. According to the Rambam and his understanding of this Gemara, the essence of the argument is what is called in Talmudic terms the "NAFKA MINA," the one practical case where the law is different, based on the original argument. For us, it is hard to imagine, because the Jewish calendar is fixed today, and the first day of Pesach can never fall out on a Friday. But before the calendar was fixed, in Talmudic times, when the argument between the Perushim and the Baytusim raged, Pesach could indeed and did fall out on Friday. If "the day after the Sabbath" is the second day of Pesach, then the Omer sacrifice could be brought on Shabbat itself. If, however, "the day after the Sabbath" is always Sunday, then the Omer was always brought on a weekday. This is the "NAFKA MINA." We know that the only type of sacrifice that was permitted to be brought on Shabbat was the "KORBAN TIZBBUR-public sacrifice." These sacrifices included the daily TEMIDIM sacrifices, the MUSAF sacrifices, and the Pesach sacrifice. The status of the Omer sacrifice is up for discussion. But unlike these other sacrifices that are permitted on Shabbat, the Omer sacrifice involved an intricate ceremony consisting of going out into the fields, cutting, songs, and then lifting up and waving. The underlying argument between the Perushim and Baytusim is if the Omer could be brought on Shabbat or not. The Perushim said that the Omer could be brought on Shabbat, while the Baytusim are suddenly the "overly religious" Jews who forbid the Omer on Shabbat. How strange.

THE CEREMONY OF CUTTING THE OMER: WHY?

The Rambam, in describing the Omer ceremony, shows how different this sacrifice is from any other grain sacrifice. He brings the description of the Omer ceremony in the Halachot Temidim Umusaffim (7:11), which includes the discussion of all public sacrifices. The Omer must be brought from barley, which is considered animal food (as opposed to the sacrifice on Shavuot, the Two Loaves, which must be brought from wheat, human food). This is a HALACHA LIMOSHE MISINAI-a law that was passed down from Moshe at Sinai. On Erev Yom Tov, the messengers of the Bet Din went into the fields and gathered the barley stalks together, while still attached to the ground, in order that it should be easier to cut the following night. The entire amount to be brought, an Omer, was rather small, 1/10 of an Eifah, for the entire people. In the desert, EACH PERSON received Manna EACH DAY the size of an Omer (Exodus 16:16), and these are the only two places in the Torah (so far) where the Omer size is mentioned (indicating some sort of connection). Thus, when the Jews enter the land, they are immediately commanded to come together as one and "give back" an Omer to God (Midrash Vayikra Rabbah 28:3). But unlike the Omer of Manna that the Jews received daily in the desert that was so tasty (Numbers 11:7-8), this Omer to be brought was from barley, animal food. Continuing the process, the Rambam describes that all the towns would gather together, so that the Omer could be cut as an ESEK GADOL, i.e. a great spectacle. Why is this so necessary and important to fulfill this

particular Mitzvah? Yesterday, the Paschal sacrifice was brought where an entire family gathered and remembered the great story of the Exodus. Why such a great effort now for animal food? The Talmud says (Menachot 64b) that usually the towns that gathered were around Jerusalem, but when there was warfare or a poor crop, they brought the Omer as far away as the gardens of Tzrifin. Thus, all the towns from Tzrifin to Jerusalem would stand around, waiting for this small amount of grain to be cut.

Then, three individuals would get ready to cut three separate Omers of barley. They would not use all three, but sift the grain 13 times to make it fine. Three scythes were used to put the three Omers in three separate baskets (they could have used one basket but it had to be a "spectacle"). All this occurred at night, right after Yom Tov finished (and on Friday night when Pesach fell on Friday). Then, all the people were waiting as Yom Tov ended, anticipating the cutting of the Omer. Three times he asked "Is it nightfall yet?" and three times the people would answer "yes." Three times he would ask "is this the correct scythe?" and three times the people would answer "yes." The same type of triple question and answer would continue with the basket, and then, says the Rambam, he would ask three times "Is it Shabbat tonight?" and the people would answer three times "yes." He asks "Should I cut nevertheless?" and the people answer "yes" three times. And then he cuts.

The Rambam explains that the reason for the three times for each detail of the ceremony was for those "misguided" people who left the Jewish community (that is how the Rambam describes the Baytusim and Sadducees -- both historically and Halachikly), who say that "the day after the Sabbath" is the Shabbat of Genesis (Sunday) and not the traditional understanding of the second day of Pesach. The Rambam continues and says that the prophets and Sanhedrin of each generation all agreed that the Omer could always be waved on the 16th of Nisan, WHETHER ON A WEEKDAY OR ON SHABBAT. Therefore, the entire purpose of this grand ceremony around the cutting of the Omer is to negate the Baytusim and in order to teach that the cutting of the Omer supersedes the Shabbat.

Why is it SO important to stress that the Omer supersedes Shabbat? We know that on Shabbat in the Beit Hamikdash, many seemingly non-Shabbat activities took place. The sacrifices and "desecration of Shabbat" were everywhere. But these activities can be rationalized, i.e. that one "holiness" (of Avodah-service) in certain areas, supersedes another "holiness" (Shabbat). But for the multitudes of Jews who gathered from Tzrifin to Jerusalem and witnessed the "desecration of the Shabbat" publicly, of cutting and carrying the barley, it certainly must have seemed strange and out of place. And, unlike the Beit Hamikdash, this cutting affected every Jewish household, as all the people were waiting to open their containers of harvested grain which could only be eaten following the ceremony of the cutting of the Omer. Thus, EVERYONE knew that the Shabbat was being "desecrated," as it had practical implications for all. The people could understand and even get used to the idea of Melacha in the Beit Hamikdash on Shabbat. But how could the Shabbat be "desecrated" by cutting the Omer so publicly?

THE UNDERLYING CONCEPTUAL ARGUMENT ABOUT THE OMER If we delve deeper, we can understand that it is in this very point that the Baytusim and Perushim differed in their fundamental understanding of Judaism. The Jewish people reached the land after forty years in the desert. In the desert, the Jew became used to receiving, each day, an Omer of "bread from heaven." Now he would have to get used to working, in order to extract bread from the ground. Thus, the Jew needed to go from the spiritual world and existence in the desert to the physical world and existence in the land of Israel. And as soon as the Jewish people entered the land (which was in Nisan), they are commanded to cut the grain waiting to be harvested. But they did not cut the grain used for human food, but, rather, the barley used for animal food. And this must take place even on, or especially on, Shabbat. Thus, this is physical, agricultural work, but work for God. Of course, immediately after the cutting of the Omer, it is still Shabbat, and everything usually forbidden on Shabbat is again totally forbidden.

Therefore, what is the underlying argument about? Rav Kook writes

(Ma-amarai Hareiyah 401) about this argument between the Baytusim and the Perushim. He says that the foundation of the building of any land, and of life itself, is agriculture. But for the Jewish people, who are holy, their land and language are also holy, which help fulfill the holy purpose of the Jewish people and of all mankind. Therefore, what is "CHOL-secular" to the rest of the world, is holy to the Jewish people, including its agriculture. This concept is symbolized by the cutting of the Omer, the first agricultural act of the year (Nisan is the first month), which is a holy act. This agricultural sacrifice thus becomes a public sacrifice that always negates and overrides the Shabbat. While the private sacrifice of the Kohen Gadol is holy but does not override the Shabbat, the first encounter of the Jewish people with its land, which extracts animal food, makes the world holy with this very physical act. This kind of holiness overrides the Shabbat. This was the underlying argument between those who eternally kept the Shabbat and those who merely extol the Shabbat with words, but are now a mere footnote of history. The Perushim demonstrated and believed in true Shemirat Shabbat and the understanding of the true holiness of the Jewish people, of the land and how they interact.

The ideology of the Baytusim was not more protective of the holiness of Shabbat, any more than the Perushim. The Baytusim did not wage a battle that the Omer Mitzvah should not violate the Shabbat because of their great caring about the Shabbat. The reason that they learned that the "the day after the Sabbath" is Sunday is not in order to prevent CHILUL SHABBAT-desecration of the Shabbat. They believed in holiness only as an idea in theory and totally separate from The reality of day to day existence. Holiness is demonstrated not only in ideas, but in the physical world, through the building of the land and its agriculture. Holiness is demonstrated in all aspects of building a nation. For the Baytusim, only a lofty concept such as service in the Beit Hamikdash has holiness that is worthy of overriding the Shabbat. But, in truth, the working of the land of Israel is an act of holiness, the point of intersection between the heavens and the earth, the spiritual and the physical. It is much more than a vital activity to physically sustain a nation. Thus, the small amount of animal food represents the unique holiness of Judaism, but only at its inception of working the land. Of course, continued and total involvement in working the land is not only NOT holiness, as this is forbidden during the rest of Shabbat. But the sacrifice to God as the first encounter with the land is a celebration of holiness, and this overrides Shabbat.

Thus, the Jewish people understood from the very beginning of its entry into the land what is Jewish holiness and what is Jewish life in the land. The people who come from the spiritual existence in the desert are not, God forbid, desecrating the Shabbat, but demonstrating how physical act of cutting animal food in the land of Israel is holiness. This is demonstrated MOST on Shabbat, in order to teach that it is not only the mysterious and mystical that is holy in Judaism, but Jewish holiness is "a kingdom of priests, and a holy nation" (Exodus 19:6), where agriculture is holy as well.

It is much easier to live an existence where holiness is kept in a hidden place. It is much more difficult to take physical actions such as agriculture, which seems mundane and secular, and raise it to an act of holiness. This concept has Halachik ramifications and that is why the Omer ceremony is so public. It is an encounter of holiness in the physical world. We will see how much this act of Omer demonstrates this principle, especially though it waving, and how this Mitzvah warns us from both sides, that we cannot live ONLY in the spiritual realm, but we also cannot live ONLY in the physical realm either.

We have learned this concept elsewhere from a different perspective. The spiritual generation of the desert enters the physical land. There is a classic argument between Rabbi Yishmael and Rabbi Shimon Bar Yochai, how both demands upon the Jew can and should be met (Berachot 35b). The Torah demands "That I will give you the rain of your land in its due season, the first rain and the latter rain, that you may (shall?) gather in your grain, and your wine, and your oil." (Deuteronomy 11:14), but, at the same time, it also says "This Book of the Torah shall not depart from your mouth; but you shall meditate on it day and night" (Joshua 1:8). How can these two ideas be

reconciled? One must somehow do both, according to Rabbi Yishmael, but Rabbi Shimon disagrees and says that since agricultural work is an unending, all consuming activity, then only if the Jewish people fulfill God's will, can the agricultural work will be done by others for the Jews, and the Jews will be free to learn Torah all day and night. But when the Jewish people do not do God's will, they will be FORCED to "gather in your grain." Abaye then says that many tried to run their lives like the view of Rabbi Shimon but failed, while many who tried to run their lives like Rabbi Yishmael succeeded.

After learning about the Mitzvah of Omer as an introduction to this Talmudic passage, this Gemara can now be understood entirely differently. The Chatam Sofer (Chidushim on Sukkah) says that there is really no argument between these two approaches. Rabbi Yishmael's approach was only said for the land of Israel, and only when most Jews live in the land. It is then that both demands can be met, learning Torah and working the land. This is because in the land of Israel, working the land is a Mitzvah in itself. Thus, the words "you may (shall?) gather in your grain" are not a curse or even a promise, but a commandment -- to work the land and take out its holy fruit. If "gather in your grain" is a Mitzvah, then there is no real conflict between the two demands. When one is obligated to put on Tefillin, a Jew cannot claim that the Mitzvah of learning Torah supersedes the Mitzvah of Tefillin. Of course, all specific Mitzvot supersede the general Mitzvah to learn Torah. The Chatam Sofer continues and says that in the land of Israel, even the non-agricultural occupations are still part of this Mitzvah. But when Jews are scattered through out the globe (Chatam Sofer wrote this in Pressburg, Hungary), the occupation of Jews is not a Mitzvah, but, rather, continues the Churban. In the Galut-Diaspora, Rabbi Yishmael agrees with Rabbi Shimon Bar Yochai, that one must devote one's entire life to Torah. And in Galut, the Chatam Sofer says that we rely on the dictum of Rab Nehorai who said (Kiddushin 82a) that he will not teach his children a trade, but, rather, teach his children only Torah. But this concept is only for the Diaspora. In Israel, agricultural work and any other work building up the land and community is a Mitzvah.

Thus, God tells the Jews in the desert about coming to the land of Israel. By placing a verse that is out of place in the middle of the concepts of the Holidays, God is telling them now, that despite their understanding the ideas of the Jewish holidays, they will not understand the Jewish concept of holiness until they come into the land of Israel. Only then will the Jews understand "" and not the holiness of withdrawal from the physical world. In addition, holiness is not achieved individually, but only through a KORBAN TZIBBUR-public sacrifice, whose height is achieved once a year, even on Shabbat, by going out into the fields with scythe and basket and asking if it Shabbat, and cutting nonetheless. When the Jews understand this, they will understand the holiness of the land of Israel, which is the holiness of the Jewish people. Until then, this idea remains a philosophical notion only. When the Jews enter the land, it becomes a reality.

PREVENTING "OVERDOING" THE PHYSICAL ASPECT OF THE LAND But how will the Jews, upon entering the land, prevent the situation feared by Rabbi Shimon Bar Yochai? At the beginning, the Jews will say that they will set aside time for Torah along with their agricultural activity. But after they start to work the land, they will see that ALL their time will be taken up. They will then claim to wait until there is free time after the agricultural season, but somehow the free time to learn will never come. What can be done to avoid this cycle? How can a Jew in the land insure that he does not merely concentrate on the physical side of the agricultural work? Thus, the details of the Mitzvah of Omer will help him. The Alshich of Tzefat asks when will "But Jeshurun became fat, and kicked" (Deuteronomy 32:15) take place? When the Jew forgets about God and believes "My power and the might of my hand has gotten me this wealth" (Deuteronomy 8:17). Therefore, at the very beginning of the process, the first cutting of the Omer grain, BEFORE a person enjoys any benefit from his efforts in the fields and BEFORE he opens up his containers of grain, God tells man "The earth is the Lord's, and all that fills it; the world, and those who dwell in it" (Psalms 24:1). All comes from God. In giving the Jew the

Mitzvah of Omer, God reminds that He is giving the land, and it is not ours, as it says "When you come to the land which I GIVE to you, and shall reap its harvest" (Leviticus 23:10). The verb "I give" is in present tense, long before any Jews actually occupied the land. Thus, God is saying that it is He who is constantly doing the giving, even now.

This is the Omer. When the Jew is about to open his container of grain and feels a sense of satisfaction, God tells the Jewish people to first bring an Omer of barley, as one unit together, the same amount that each person received from Him each day in the desert. God wants the Jews to remember that this grain does NOT go from on high down to the ground (as the Manna did), but THE OMER IS WAVED FROM BOTTOM TO TOP (MUNAF). All the grain that enjoyed afterwards must first have the few hundred grams of barley given completely to God above from below. He who understands this message, and performs this act at the beginning of the harvest season, will not become a total physical being, tied to the land throughout the rest of the harvest season.

That is why, possibly, at the very end of the section that discusses the Counting of the Omer, the verse again repeats itself "And when you reap the harvest of your land, you shall not make clean riddance up to the corners of your field when you reap, nor shall you gather any gleanings of your harvest; you shall leave them to the poor, and to the stranger; I am the Lord your God" (Leviticus 23:22). This verse is not at ALL related to anything in the Parsha. The Meshech Chochma comments on this verse that avoiding the pitfall of only concentrating on the physical side of the land is not only related at the beginning of the Omer Parsha, but also later on in the Parsha and later on in the harvest, as the Jew must also remind himself that God says to leave a corner for the poor or leave over that which dropped accidentally. Thus, what could have made a person into a servant to the land will now uplift this person to become a servant to God. Agriculture in the land of Israel is not merely an economic endeavor. He who understands the uniqueness of the land will also understand that the Omer that is harvested is holy. Only he who understands that the connection to the land is not logical and is not incidental to a successful economy, but it is an expression of holiness to establish a "a kingdom of priests, and a holy nation," will be able to understand why, upon entering the land, the Jews are commanded to "desecrate the Shabbat" and cut grain on Shabbat.

THE RAMBAM AND JOINT OWNERSHIP OF THE LAND OF ISRAEL In discussing the powers of the Jewish king, the Rambam (Hilchot Melachim 4:1-6) says that a king may tax the people, conscript and an army, and even expropriate land. But, unlike the Talmudic reference upon which this Halacha is based (Sanhedrin 20b), the Rambam, ON HIS OWN, says that only by the expropriation of land, the king must pay the owners for all land taken. This is contrary to the verses (I Samuel 8:11-14) and the Gemara, where the king need not pay the conscripted soldiers. From where did the Rambam get this Halacha about payment for land? The answer ties together everything we learned until now. We know that the law of the king is binding for Jews in all countries (DINA DEMALCHUTA DINA), where it does not contradict Halacha (Nedarim 28a). Rabbi Nissim Gerondi (RAN) believes that this Halacha is not applicable to Jewish kings in the land of Israel. He proves it logically in his commentary on this Talmudic passage. We know that logically, DINA DEMALCHUTA DINA operates in all countries, because since the land belongs to him, the king can legitimately say to the population that if you do not follow my laws, I will chase you off my land and out of the country. But Jewish kings cannot make this claim, since the land of Israel belongs in partnership to ALL the Jewish people. Any olive tree is no more the king's than any other Jew's. Thus, the Jewish king may indeed force Jews into conscription, but may not expropriate land without paying for it, since, according to the Rambam (and the Ran), the land of Israel is God's and He gave it to all the people. This is not only a philosophic idea, but a Halacha as well. Only he who understands that the land is not his, but belongs to God, will also understand that the land belongs to each Jew equally. And only he who knows how to understand the message of lifting and waving the Omer when he reaches the land, can be assured at the very end of the harvest, that he will also know to leave a

corner of the field for the poor, as it is not his land. The words of the message are crystal clear. As the Midrash points out, why did the Jews merit the land of Israel? Because they kept the Mitzvah of the Omer sacrifice. When Jews understand the concept of the Omer, they could then be assured that Gidon would be successful, as was Chezkiyahu. The Jews would inherit the land and receive the promise made to Avraham, knowing that the land belongs to God. This national understanding is based on the spiritual concept explained through the first Mitzvah performed upon entering the land, the Mitzvah of Omer, which insures that the people will continue to merit the land.

Peninim on the Torah Rabbi A. Leib Scheinbaum

Hebrew Academy of Cleveland Parshas Emor

I should be sanctified among the Bnei Yisrael. (22:32)

Every Jew is commanded to sanctify Hashem's Name. A Jew's total demeanor is to reflect his subordination to Hashem. His behavior must be admirable; his dealings with others, the height of integrity, his devotion to mitzvos, exemplary. This pasuk serves as the general commandment to give up one's life, if necessary, to sanctify Hashem's Name. It, therefore, seems strange that the Torah does not write this mitzvah in a stronger, more emphatic form. It simply says, "I should be sanctified." Why does the Torah not say, "Sanctify My Name," as a form of command. The Torah seems to take a nonchalant approach to Kiddush Hashem. It is as if it were saying, "I will become sanctified."

Horav Nissan Alpert, zl, explains that the goal of the Torah's text is to teach us how one develops the level of conviction to be prepared to give up his life as a martyr for Hashem. From where does he call upon such remarkable fortitude that he is willing to give up his life to sanctify Hashem's Name? The answer is: it cannot happen overnight. One does not suddenly conjure up the ability to be moser nefesh, sacrifice himself for Hashem. Only the willingness to live as a Jew can produce the willingness to die as a Jew. A Jew who observes mitzvos, who sanctifies his life through Kashrus, Shabbos, family purity; who strives constantly to cling closer to Hashem, who, when he errs, confesses his sin and seeks atonement through teshuvah, repentance, is the one who sanctifies his speech and overall personality. Such a person is prepared to give up his life for the Almighty. By fulfilling the "hasevu", "I should be sanctified," by experiencing a wholesome life of kedushah, one elevates himself to the sublime level of mesiras nefesh.

This may be inferred from the Tanna who personified mesiras nefesh, whose life ended in a most tragic but striking example of Kiddush Hashem - Rabbi Akiva. Chazal tell us that when Rabbi Akiva was led out to be executed, he recited the Shema. He continued while his skin was being flayed off his body with steel combs. Imagine the excruciating pain and suffering he must have sustained. Yet, he continued to recite Shema with the same religious fervor and conviction he had demonstrated on a daily level. His students who were watching in shock and disbelief asked, "Rebbe, so much? How much is one supposed to suffer?" Rabbi Akiva responded, "My whole life I awaited the moment that I could sanctify myself to Hashem." Horav Alpert interprets the dialogue between Rabbi Akiva and his students in the following manner. The students wondered how a human being could endure so much pain and suffering - even if it was for the sake of Heaven. Rabbi Akiva told them that he spent an entire life conditioning himself for this moment when he could martyr himself for the Almighty. It did not occur overnight; it took a lifetime of preparation that climaxed with the ultimate sacrifice - himself.

This article is provided as part of Shema Yisrael Torah Network

The Weekly Internet P A R A S H A - P A G E by Mordecai Kornfeld of Har Nof, Jerusalem Founder of the Dafyomi Advancement Forum Email kornfeld@jencom.com Berachot and best wishes to Myron Chaitovsky of Teaneck, N.J., for sponsoring this issue and helping to bring words of Torah into Jewish homes in all "four corners of the Earth"!

PARASHAT EMOR 5757 THE DUAL THEME OF THE "REGALIM"

In this week's Parasha the Torah delineates the three "Regalim" (pilgrimage festivals) of the Jewish year. The dates of these Regalim are observed as Chagim, or times of rejoicing, during which all of the Jewish people would go to the Beit Hamikdash (the Holy Temple) to rejoice as a nation in the kindness which Hashem has bestowed upon His people.

The Torah tells us that these Regalim were meant to commemorate events that took place in the history of the Jewish nation at the time of our Exodus from Egypt. On the festival of Pesach (Passover), the Torah tells us (Shmot 13:3,6), we commemorate the fact that Hashem took us out of Egypt at that time of the lunar year. On the festival of Sukkot (Tabernacles), as we read in this week's Parasha (Vayikra 23,43), we remember Hashem's care for us as we wandered through the Wilderness on our long journey from Egypt to Eretz Yisroel, during which we lived in the shelter of protective tents.

The Torah refers to the festival of Shavuot in a number of places, but never associates it explicitly with any event from the time of the Exodus, or from any other time, for that matter. We are told in the Gemara (Pesachim 68b), however, that the sixth day of the month of Sivan (i.e. Shavuot) was the day on which we received the Torah at Mount Sinai -- a point that we mention several times during the Shavuot prayers as well. On Shavuot, then, we commemorate the Receiving of the Torah which took place shortly after our Exodus from Egypt.

The early commentators point out that the Torah does contain discrete allusions to the fact that a festival is observed to commemorate the Receiving of the Torah. In Shmot (3:12), when Hashem assures Moshe that his mission to take the Jewish people out of Egypt will succeed, He promises Moshe that upon their exodus from Egypt, the redeemed nation "will worship G-d on this mountain." Rashi explains that this "worship" means the receiving of the Torah. Later, when Moshe speaks to Pharaoh, he tells Pharaoh that the entire nation will be leaving Egypt, the young and the old, even the cattle, because "We have a holiday ("Chag") of Hashem to celebrate." Ibn Ezra (Vayikra 23:11) explains that Moshe meant that the Jews were going to receive the Torah (as Hashem said they were to do on their way out of Egypt), and the day of that great event would be celebrated as a Chag. We thus find that a holiday is indeed to be designated to commemorate the Receiving of the Torah. As we have explained, that holiday is Shavuot.

Another event associated with the Regalim of Pesach and Shavuot is the Counting of the Omer, which we are in the midst of now. Beginning on the second day of Pesach, we count forty-nine days and declare the fiftieth day as the holiday of Shavuot, as the Torah tells us in this week's Parasha (Vayikra 23:15). The Chinuch (Mitzvah #273) explains that we count the days to Shavuot in order to demonstrate that from the moment we left Egypt with the knowledge that we were on our way to receive the Torah, we eagerly counted the days until that moment arrived. Our annual Omer-count, too, is a sign of our longing for the Torah. Consequently, the Omer-count serves as an introduction to the festival of Shavuot.

Shibbolei Haleket (3:236) explains that the Torah hints at this association between the Omer-count and the Receiving of the Torah in the verse cited above. Hashem tells Moshe that the people "will worship (*Ta'Avdun*) G-d on this mountain" (i.e., they will receive the Torah). There is an extra letter "Nun" at the end of the word *Ta'Avdun*. The letter "Nun," which has a numerical value of fifty, was added to the word to show that *fifty* days after the Jewish People left Egypt, they would receive the Torah on Mount Sinai. These 50 days are the forty-nine days of the Omer-count, and Shavuot.

II We find, however, an entirely different theme in the three Regalim mentioned elsewhere in the Torah. In Shmot (34:18) the Torah tells us that the festival of Pesach is to be celebrated in *Chodesh Ha'aviv*, the time during which produce sprouts forth from the ground. (*Aviv* means the beginning of growth, when the produce of the earth begins to sprout.) Regarding Shavuot, the verse tells us (Shmot 34:22) that it is observed at the time of the year during which wheat is normally harvested. Of Sukkot, we are informed (in Shmot 34:22 and again in this week's Parasha, Vayikra 23:39) that it is to be celebrated at the time of the in-gathering of the produce. (After

the harvest, grains and certain fruits were left out in the fields to dry. When they were fully dry, they were brought into the house for eating or grinding into flour.) This time, the three holidays are associated with seasons in the agricultural cycle. At each major point in the cycle a holiday is celebrated, during which we thank Hashem for what our fields have given us so far.

It is interesting to note that at least one commentator (Shibbolei Haleket, *ibid.*, quoting Rabbi Yehudah Hechacid) even associates the counting of the Omer with the farming seasons. He explains that normally, the supreme Jewish court in Yerushalayim decides on which day the new month will begin by accepting testimony on the sighting of a new moon. Messengers were then sent throughout the Land of Israel to announce the day they chose for the new month to begin, so that people would know on which days to celebrate the holidays of that month. In the months following Pesach, however, Jews would be so busy working in their fields and harvesting their produce that it would be hard for the court to find enough messengers to inform the people of all the small towns when the new month was to begin, and thus when to observe the holiday of Shavuot. The Torah therefore tells us to celebrate the holiday based on a count of forty-nine days from the second day of Pesach. Since Nisan, in which Pesach is observed, is announced before the "busy" season, this would make it simple for all to determine on their own exactly when Shavuot was to be observed.

The Maharal (Gevurot Hashem ch. 46) points out another association between the Omer-count and the agricultural seasons. The day following the first day of Pesach, the Torah tells us (Devarim 16:9), is the first day of the barley harvest. (Barley, which ripens sooner than does wheat, is the first grain to be harvested each year.) The Omer-count is therefore related to Shavuot, the holiday of the harvest, because the Omer-count spans the entire harvest season, from the first grain harvest to the last.

III These two themes of the Regalim -- the commemoration of the Exodus and thanking Hashem for the agricultural seasons -- seem to be two completely disparate themes that coincide in the three Regalim. The Maharal (*ibid.*), however, offers a brilliant explanation to demonstrate that, to the contrary, the two themes are intimately related:

The three parts of the agricultural cycle are the *Aviv* (sprouting season), which marks the beginning of the new growth; the *Ketzir* (harvest season), when the new produce is mature and its growth is completed; and the *Asif* (the in-gathering season), during which the now lifeless and dry produce is removed from the fields. In a similar manner, the world as a whole, and the Jewish nation as a microcosm, also have three stages of growth: a time of creation; a time of maturity; and the End of the Time, at which point Hashem will bring an end to existence as we know it and all of Creation will return to be one with its Creator. The three Regalim, suggests Maharal, represent these three times in the growth of the Jewish nation, as we shall now explain.

IV The holiday of Pesach is the holiday of the creation of the Jewish nation. It was on the night of Pesach that the Jewish nation was formed, as the Jews gathered together and left Egypt as a nation with a leader at its head. The holiday which marks the beginning of growth for the natural world is also the holiday which marks the beginning of growth for the Jewish people. It is the holiday of Creation.

Shavuot, the harvest festival, is the holiday celebrating the maturity of the produce. As a nation, we reached our maturity and completion on the day that we received the Torah -- the guidebook upon which our daily lives for the rest of history are based. On the day upon which we received this instruction book from Above, the world as a whole and the Jewish people in particular realized the purpose for which were created, just as the purpose of the planting season is realized at the time of the harvest.

The third agricultural stage is the stage of the in-gathering of the produce, when the dry and lifeless produce and is removed from the fields. At this point in the agricultural season we observe the festival of Sukkot, during which we remembering that each of us -- and the world as a whole -- will leave this existence and return to Hashem, when He takes from us our life-source.

How does Sukkot commemorate this destiny? As we mentioned, on

Sukkot we remember that Hashem sheltered us with tents in the Wilderness when we needed protection from the elements. These protective tents are symbols of the frailty of Creation and the need all creatures have for Hashem's protection in order to continue to exist. When the time comes and Hashem no longer provides us with His protection, we will be removed from this world and return to Hashem, our Creator and Protector.

Sukkot is thus the holiday of human frailty. Every year, we leave our houses during Sukkot to live in a scanty Sukkah, a temporary dwelling with twigs or pieces of wood on top in place of a proper roof. In this manner, we remember that mankind is not here forever, that we depend on Hashem's protection and His continuing grants. This coincides with the season of the in-gathering, during which the produce of the fields is taken from the fields in which it grew and brought into the home. Similarly, on this holiday we remember that Hashem will take us out of this world and "bring us home," i.e. He will bring our souls to their final destination.

May Hashem grant us to live a true Torah life and to find inspiration in every day of the year and in every part of Creation.

This article is provided as part of Shema Yisrael Torah Network

PARSHA Q&A * In-Depth Questions on the Parsha and Rashi's commentary. Parshas Emor For the week ending 10 Iyar 5757 16 & 17 May 1997

Parsha Questions

1. Which male descendants of Aaron are exempt from the prohibition against contacting a dead body? 2. Does a kohen have an option regarding becoming ritually defiled when his unmarried sister passes away? 3. How does one honor a kohen? 4. How does the Torah restrict the Kohen Gadol with regard to mourning? 5. The Torah states in verse 22:3 that one who "approaches holy objects" while in a state of tumah is penalized with excision. What does the Torah mean by "approaches"? 6. What is the smallest piece of a corpse that is able to transmit tumah? 7. Who in the household of a kohen may eat terumah? 8. If the daughter of a kohen marries a "zar" she may no longer eat Terumah. What is a zar? 9. What is the difference between a neder (vow) and a nedavah (free-will offering)? 10. May a person slaughter an animal and its father on the same day? 11. How does the Torah define "profaning" the Name of Hashem? 12. Apart from Shabbos, how many days are there during the year about which the Torah says that work is forbidden? 13. How big is an omer? 14. On what day do we begin to "count the omer"? 15. Why do we begin counting the omer at night? 16. How does the omer differ from other minchah offerings? 17. The blowing of the shofar on Rosh Hashanah is called a "zichron teruah" (sound of remembrance). For what is it a reminder? 18. What is unusual about the wood of the esrog tree? 19. Who was the father of the blasphemer? 20. What is the penalty for intentionally wounding one's parent?

Bonus QUESTION: "And you shall count from the day after Pesach, from the day you bring the omer offering, seven complete weeks.." (23:15) `Counting the omer' is not the only place the Torah commands a mitzva of counting. A man or woman who has a certain type of emission must count seven clean days after the emission ceases and then immerse in a mikveh. This commandment is stated clearly in the Torah. Why, then, do we make a blessing each day when counting the omer, but a person counting the seven clean days does not make a blessing at all?

I Did Not Know That! The Torah forbids slaughtering a mother animal and its offspring on the same day. Therefore, if someone sold an animal to be slaughtered later that day, it is then forbidden for him to sell its offspring, unless he informs the second buyer of the sale of the mother. Aruch Hashulchan 16:9, Chullin 83a

Recommended Reading List Ramban 21:6 Holiness 22:32 Sanctifying G-d 23:17 Leavened Bread 23:27 Judgment and Repentance 23:40 The Esrog Sefer Hachinuch 291 Perfection of Creation 294 Divine Providence 296 Purpose of Creation 306 Counting the Omer 313 Yom Kippur 324 The Lulav 325 The Succah

Answers to this Week's Questions All references are to the verses and Rashi's commentary, unless otherwise stated

1. 21:1 - Challalim -- those disqualified from the priesthood because they are descended from a relationship forbidden to a kohen. 2. 21:3 - No, he is required to do so. 3. 21:8 - He is first in all matters of holiness. For example, a kohen reads from the Torah first, and is usually the one to lead the blessings before and after meals. 4. 21:10-12 - He may not allow his hair to grow long, nor attend to his close relatives if they die, nor accompany a funeral procession. 5. 22:3 - Eats. 6. 22:5 - A piece the size of an olive. 7. 22:11 - He, his wife, his sons, his unmarried daughters, and his non-Jewish slaves. 8. 22:12 - A non-kohen. 9. 22:18 - A neder is an obligation upon a person; a nedavah is an obligation placed upon an object. 10. 22:28 - Yes. The Torah only prohibits slaughtering an animal and its mother on the same day. 11. 22:32 - Willfully transgressing the commandments. 12. 23:7-36 - Seven. 13. 23:10 - One tenth of an eipha. 14. 23:15 - On the 16th of Nissan. 15. 23:15 - The Torah requires counting seven complete weeks. If we begin counting in the daytime, the seven weeks would not be complete. 16. 23:16 - It was made from barley. 17. 23:24 - The akeidas (binding of) Yitzchak. 18. 23:40 - It has the same taste as the fruit. 19. 24:10 - The Egyptian killed by Moshe (Shemos 2:12). 20.

24:21 - Death.

Bonus ANSWER: If a person has a recurrence of the emission during the seven days, he must start counting all over again from the beginning. Therefore, he can not make a blessing on the counting, because it's impossible for him to know if his counting will be successful. The 49 days between Pesach and Shavuos, on the other hand, are certain to occur. Therefore, we make a blessing. Tosafos Kesuvos 72a
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ravfrand@torah.org "RavFrاند" List - Rabbi Frاند on Parshas Emor

Hard to be a Kohain? Appreciating the 'Vayomer' Parshas Emor contains the portion of Priesthood, beginning with instructions to the Kohanim regarding their special laws. These laws include the fact that a Kohain is not allowed to have any direct contact with a dead body except for his immediate relatives. Even after a Kohain buries a close relative, Rachmana litzlan, he may not go back to the cemetery. This is a very difficult thing, but that is part of being a Kohain. Kohanim have other restrictions, beyond that of normal Jews. They are not allowed to marry divorcees. They have to be careful in their consumption of Teruma and Kodshim. If it is "difficult to be a Jew," as the world says, it is even harder to be a Kohain. If that is the case, the choice of words that the Torah uses to begin this portion, seems strange. The verse begins "Vayomer Hashem el Moshe" (And G-d said to Moshe) [Vayikra 21:1]. We know that most chapters in the Torah begin with the words "Vayedaber Hashem el Moshe leimor" (And G-d spoke to Moshe saying). Our Sages tell us that the difference between "Vayomer" and "Vayedaber" is that the latter is a harsher type of speech, the former is a much softer type of speech. To give an example, when I want my children to make their beds and clean up before they leave the house in the morning, I say, "Will you PLEASE make your bed?" That is 'Vayedaber.' When I tell them "Go take a snack," that is 'Vayomer.' They will readily take it. If that is the case, what choice of words should the Torah have used over here? Obviously, since the Torah was giving restrictions -- in terms of who they could marry, in terms of what they could eat, in terms of what type of funerals they could go to -- we would have expected "Vayedaber Hashem!" G-d is asking them to give up a lot. It should need a harsher type of language. Yet, the Torah employed the much softer expression, Vayomer. Rav Moshe Feinstein says a beautiful thought [in Darash Moshe]: The role of the Kohanim was to be the spiritual mentors of the Jewish people. "They teach Thy Laws to Jacob and Thy Teachings to Israel" [Devorim 33:10]. In order for a person to be an effective leader and teacher, in order to for him to be an effective role model, he can not feel that his life is a drag. He can not feel that he has a difficult life and that his restrictions are a pain. If the person, who is supposed to be the leader and teacher, feels that his lot is a tough lot, then he cannot be an effective Kohain. In order to give over a heritage to someone, one must feel privileged, rather than burdened. If the Kohain feels that all the things that the Torah put on him are a burden rather than a privilege, then he can't be the spiritual leader that we want him to be. That is why the Torah uses the language "Vayomer." Even though it may seem hard, they must accept it and feel as if it is easy. Rav Moshe goes on to say, that the Rambam writes in Mishneh Torah, at the end of Hilchos Shmitah v'Yovel [13:13], a very famous passage. He says that this role of spiritual mentor is not restricted to the Tribe of Levi. Any person who accepts upon himself a life of Holy Service, any one who decides to step into a role of Torah disseminator, any one who decides to devote his life to the work of G-d, he too has the status of a Kohain or a Levi. Rav Moshe says that this is an ethical lesson to be learned by those who enter the Holy Professions, the work of teachers, the work of Rabbis, the work of community professionals. Even though we all know the burdens that Torah teachers and Rabbis have to suffer, even though we all know that so many times they are treated without the proper respect they deserve, but if the Levi or the teacher or the

Rebbe feels that it is a pain and he is constantly 'kvetching' about his situation, Rav Moshe says, he should get out. He cannot be an effective teacher. The effective Rabbi, must feel that it is a 'Vayomer.' It is tough, but it is a privilege. Yes, we all may have our moments where we feel that it is too much, but they should only be moments. That must not be the way we always are. If we feel that it is too difficult, we can't give it over. If one can't give it over, according to Rav Moshe then he should get out now. That is way the Parsha of Kohanim is said with 'Vayomer.'

The Key To Understanding the Significance of the Omer

In this week's parsha we find the mitzvah of the Offering of the Omer. The Torah says that on the 16th of Nissan, on the second day of Pesach, the Jewish people were obligated to bring an Omer offering. The bringing of the Omer offering permitted all types of new wheat crops (Chadash) to be eaten. Then the Torah gives us an added command: "And you shall count unto yourselves from the morrow after this sabbath, from the day of your bringing the omer of the waving, seven sabbaths shall it be" [Vayikra 23:15]. There are many difficulties that we find in connection with the Omer offering. Number one: What does the word 'omer' mean? Omer was just a measure. It was the amount of grain that they had to bring. Is it not strange that the Korban should be called by the name omer? That is, in effect, like calling it the "Quart Offering" or the "Liter Offering." Other offerings are called names: Pesach, Todah (Thanksgiving), Shelamim (Peace), Shte HaLechem (Two Loaves). They have descriptive names. Omer is a measure. Why should that be the name of the Korban? Number two: What is so crucial about this offering, that we tie our entire counting between Pesach and Shavuos to this Offering: The first day of the Omer, the second day of the Omer, etc.? Number three: Why was the omer brought on the 16th day of Nissan? This is not one of the special days of Pesach -- it is neither here nor there. What happened on the 16th of Nissan that this Korban should be brought specifically then? The Medrash elaborates on the great merit and significance of the Omer Offering: In its merit Avraham received the land of Canaan; in its merit the Jews were saved in the days of Gideon; in its merit they were saved in the days of Chizkiyahu; in its merit they were saved in the days of Haman; in its merit they were saved in the days of Yechezkel. The Medrash goes on and on about how this Omer offering saved the day. What is so meaningful about this Korban HaOmer? The Be'er Yosef says that the key to understanding the Omer is the following Medrash: "G-d said to Moshe 'In the wilderness I provided a daily Omer of manna for every Jew. As payment, let the Jews now bring for Me an Omer offering every year on the 16th of Nissan.'" This Medrash is telling us that the purpose of the Korban Omer is to remind us of the Omer we that we all received in the wilderness. That is why it is called by the name Omer -- to remind us of the famous Omer of the manna. As we mentioned many times, the manna that we received in the wilderness is our reminder that it is G-d who provides us with bread from Heaven. Just as in the wilderness we clearly saw, without a shadow of a doubt, that it was G-d who gives us our livelihood, so too in all generations we must remember that as much as we work and as successful as we think we may be, it is G-d that gives us bread from Heaven. That is the lesson of the manna. That is what the Omer Offering is all about. When we are harvesting our new wheat crop and we might tend to think that "my might and the power of my hand, brought me all this wealth" we are commanded to bring a Korban HaOmer to remember the manna. That is why the omer is brought on the 16th of Nissan. We have it by tradition that the manna stopped falling on Adar 7 (the day of Moshe's death) and they had left over in the vessels until the 16 of Nissan. On the day they ran out of manna they had to bring the Omer Offering. That too is why we count Sefirah for 7 complete weeks and tie it to the Omer Offering. If we brought an Omer Offering only one day of the year, perhaps the crucial lesson that it teaches us would be lost. The Halacha therefore requires that we review this lesson 49 times, over and over, until it becomes second nature. That is why the Medrash goes on and on and mentions how in the merit of the Omer the Jews were saved so many times. If we learn the lesson of livelihood -- that it is only G-d who gives us

the ability to make a living -- this is indeed a lesson that can cause us to merit the acquisition of the Land and all the other salvations enumerated by the Medrash.

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