

| Candles (earliest) | EMOR | Havdala | next week |
|--------------------|----------------------|---------|-------------|
| 6:47 (5:58) | Yerushalayim | 8:03 | 6:52 / 8:08 |
| 7:04 (6:00) | S'derot | 8:05 | 7:08 / 8:10 |
| 7:02 (5:58) | Gush Etzion | 8:03 | 7:07 / 8:09 |
| 7:04 (6:00) | Raanana | 8:05 | 7:09 / 8:11 |
| 7:03 (5:59) | Beit Shemesh/RBS | 8:04 | 7:07 / 8:09 |
| 7:04 (6:00) | Netanya | 8:06 | 7:09 / 8:11 |
| 7:04 (6:00) | Rehovot | 8:05 | 7:08 / 8:10 |
| 7:00 (5:59) | Be'erSheva/Otniel | 8:03 | 7:05 / 8:09 |
| 7:03 (5:59) | Modi'in/Chashmona'im | 8:04 | 7:08 / 8:10 |
| 6:47 (6:00) | Petach Tikva | 8:05 | 6:52 / 8:11 |
| 6:47 (5:58) | Maale Adumim | 8:03 | 6:52 / 8:08 |
| 7:03 (5:59) | Ginot Shomron | 8:04 | 7:08 / 8:10 |
| 7:02 (5:58) | Gush Shiloh | 8:03 | 7:07 / 8:09 |
| 7:02 (5:58) | K4 & Hevron | 8:03 | 7:07 / 8:08 |
| 7:02 (5:58) | Giv'at Ze'ev | 8:03 | 7:07 / 8:09 |
| 7:03 (6:00) | Yad Binyamin | 8:05 | 7:08 / 8:10 |
| 7:04 (6:00) | Ashkelon | 8:05 | 7:09 / 8:11 |
| 6:53 (5:59) | Tzfat | 8:05 | 6:58 / 8:10 |
| 9:49 (8:18) | Reykjavik | 12:35 | 10:12/1:23 |

Rabbeinu Tam Havdala - EMOR - 8:43pm

Ranges are 10 days. WED-FRI
30 Nisan - 9 Iyar • May 4-13

| | |
|--|-----------------|
| Earliest Talit & T'filin | 4:57-4:49am |
| Sunrise | 5:52-5:45am |
| Sof Z'man K' Sh'ma (Magen Avraham: 8:34-8:29am) | 9:13-9:09am |
| Sof Z'man T'fila (Magen Avraham: 9:47-9:44am) | 10:21-10:18am |
| Chatzot (halachic noon) | 12:36pm-12:36am |
| Mincha Gedola (earliest Mincha) | 1:10-1:10pm |
| Plag Mincha | 5:56½-6:01½pm |
| Sunset (based on sea level: 7:20-7:27pm) | 7:26-7:32pm |

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5 Iyar falls on the same day of the week as the 7th day of Pesach. Its rule is LO AGaH - not on SUN, TUE, THU. That's yes for MON, WED, FRI, and Shabbat. However, if 5 Iyar is FRI or Shabbat, Yom HaAtzmaut is WED. And if it falls on MON, Yom HaAtzmaut is TUE. So in reality, Yom HaAtzmaut can be Tue, Wed, Thu.

Food & drink, east & west

Jerusalem houses and days/weeks

It's good we don't say the intervening 39

Witnesses and wise people and the prophets

7th in the former - first in the latter

☞ The ability to stick to a decision is often nothing other than the inability to depart from it.

From "A Candle by Day" by Rabbi Shraga Silverstein

A Candle by Day • The Antidote • The World of Chazal
by Rabbi Shraga Silverstein

Now available at 054-209-9200

Yosef's brothers, Aharon, Elazar, kohanim, Bnei Yisrael

Once in Emor and three other times in Divrei HaYamim Bet. And that's it.

more zwitterion

LEAD TIDBIT cont. from front page

and honey..." A few p'sukim later, G-d tells Moshe that the sign (proof?) that He has sent Moshe to take the people out is that they will return to this spot (Har Chorev, Har Sinai) to serve Him (to receive the Torah and enter into an everlasting covenant with G-d). That pretty much covers it all. It leaves out a lot of detail - including a lot of bad detail, but it covers the whole course of Jewish History. Exodus, Torah, Eretz Yisrael (with Beit HaMikdash).

Note too that this sequence happened (happens and will happen) more than once. We leave exile, return to Torah, re-enter Eretz Yisrael.

And along the road of Jewish History we've had our tragedies - those that the mournful aspect of the Omer mark, as well as the Holocaust (and many other experiences).

And Yom HaZikaron L'Chal'lei Tzaha"l, Memorial Day to Israel's fallen. The modern State of Israel's wars and terrorist attacks against us are and have been a variation on a theme, but they too go into the timeline of Jewish History.

Yom HaAtzmaut, marking the establishment of the State of Israel, would be significant at any time of the year - but at the beginning of Iyar, during the Omer, it has a special significance. It fits into the flow of Pesach to Shavuot, from slavery and oppression to receiving the Torah and to having the Beit HaMikdash in Eretz Yisrael. It is "on the road" of Jewish History. We

are not "there" yet, but we are on the way. As we said in DAYEINU, "had you brought us into Eretz Yisrael but not yet with a standing Beit HaMikdash, DAYEINU - there would be sufficient cause to thank You. It is foolish to view the modern State of Israel as the complete realization of our age-old dream (as some - many? - secular Zionists believe), and it is folly to dismiss Medinat Yisrael as nothing (as some - many? - religious non-Zionists do).

As we have written many times, the "healthy" attitude towards the State of Israel and towards the celebration of Yom HaAtzmaut is encapsulated in the official exchange of greetings for Yom HaAtzmaut: One says to his fellow, MO'ADIM L'SIMCHA (good Yom Tov, times for rejoicing), and his fellow answers, LIG-ULA SH'LEIMA, towards the complete redemption. This is expressed several other ways in the davening and readings for Yom HaAtzmaut, and it represents - as mentioned above - the 'healthiest' attitude. G-d, we appreciate and thank You for the opportunity to build a society of Jews in their (our) intended venue, and to strive to live a life of Torah here in anticipation of and to do our share to hasten the time of Mashiach.

Yom Yerushalayim at the end of Iyar further shows us another milestone on the road of Jewish History. There's more, but we'll suffice to say may we see the full realization of our dreams...

EMOR

31st of 54 sedras;
8th of 10 in Vayikra

Written on 215 lines in a Torah (rank: 20th)

17 parshiyot; 11 open, 6 closed (above avg.)

124 p'sukim, rank: 15th; 1st in Vayikra
Same as Sh'mot, but shorter in words & letters
Very very close in number of lines; but number of parshiyot affects line-count because of the blank spaces between parshiyot.

1614 words, rank: 22nd; 2nd in Vayikra

6106 letters, rank: 23rd; 2nd in Vayikra

Relatively short p'sukim account for its drop in ranking for words and letters

MITZVOT

63 of the 613 mitzvot; 24 pos. 39 prohibitions

Only Ki Teitzei (with 74) has more mitzvot than Emor. Only K'doshim and Ki Teitzei are more mitzva-dense. Emor has more than one mitzva per two p'sukim, five times the Torah's average.

Aliya-by-Aliya Sedra Summary

Numbers in [square brackets] are the Mitzva-counts of Sefer HaChinuch AND Rambam's Sefer HaMitzvot. A=ASEI (positive mitzva); L=LAV (prohibition) - Rambam counts positives (248) and prohibitions (365) separately. X:Y is the perek and pasuk from which the mitzva is counted.

[P> X:Y (Z)] and [S> X:Y (Z)] indicate start of a parsha p'tucha or s'tuma respectively. X:Y is Perek:Pasuk of the beginning of the parsha; (Z) is the number of p'sukim in the parsha.

Kohen - First Aliya 15 p'sukim - 21:1-15

A kohen gets the first Aliya of every Torah reading. That's a given. But this particular first Aliya is custom made for a kohen.

[P> 21:1 (9)] Following Parshat K'doshim, which focuses on the challenge to the individual Jew and the whole Jewish community to rise to higher levels of sanctification, Emor begins with the special sanctity of the kohen, and the even higher sanctity of the Kohein Gadol. These higher levels of k'dusha are concomitant with stricter rules of personal religious conduct.

A kohen is not to become ritually defiled due to contact with a dead body [263,L166 21:1], except for his seven closest relatives: wife, mother, father, son, daughter, brother, and (unmarried) sister. This is more than permission; a kohen is required to participate in the funeral and burial of his close relatives, becoming Tamei [264, A37 21:3].

Kohanim (and all Jews) are forbidden to afflict the body in any way as a sign of grief. [This is an example, among many, of a mitzva

that appears in a particular sedra, but is counted elsewhere. In other words, Emor has even more than the "official" count of 63 mitzvot.]

MitzvaWatch

The Talmud teaches that from this same source, mitzva 264, comes the requirement, incumbent upon all Jews (not just kohanim), to mourn one's seven close relatives. It is important to understand that this is not a case of rabbinic extension of Torah law or rabbinic legislation sanctioned by their obligation to "protect" Torah and mitzvot. This is more. This is part of the definition of the Torah's mitzva #264, as transmitted to us by the Oral Law via the Talmud. The Sages of the Talmud present us with two categories of Law - Torah Law, which includes the Written Word AND the Oral Law, and Rabbinic law. They not only teach us both, but they (most often) clearly differentiate between the two categories for us, so that we will know what is D'ORAITA and what is D'RABANAN, thereby neither adding to nor detracting from the Torah. Our commitment to G-d at Sinai includes careful adherence to Torah and Rabbinic Law (remember: the Torah requires us to listen to the rulings and teachings of the Sanhedrin). But it is important for us to know the difference so that we will not have a distorted view of the Torah. (There are also practical distinctions between Biblical and Rabbinic law.)

Specifically, in the case of mourning, the first day is Torah Law, the balance of

Shiva is Rabbinic. Rabbinic, but inspired by the Torah. But that's not the same as Torah law itself.

On another point... Note the one difference - a kohen becomes Tamei to his sister only if she was not married. Today, a kohen sits shiva for a married sister, but still has to maintain the practice of avoiding Tum'a. For a non-kohen, there is no distinction as to whether a person's sister is married or not. She is one of the 7 relatives for whom one mourns.

Kohanim must be holy and avoid desecrating His Name, because they perform sacred service. This mitzva for the kohen is also taken to refer to the prohibition of doing Temple service after purification in a mikve, but before the day has completely passed (i.e. stars-out) [265, L76 21:6]. Such a person is known as a T'VUL YOM. His complete purification only lacks time, not any act of his own.

A kohen may not marry a "zona" (a non-Jew and/or a Jewish woman who has had relations with a man who is forbidden to her) [266, L158 21:7], a "chalala" (the daughter of a kohen from a woman to whom he is forbidden because he is a kohen) [267,L159 21:7], nor a divorcee [268,L160 21:7].

Because of the sanctity invested in the kohen by HaShem, we are commanded to honor the kohen [269,A32 21:8]. Calling him to the Torah first is one form of this

honor. So is having him lead Birkat HaZimun. And, we may not "use" a kohen to serve us.

[S> 21:10 (6)] The Kohen Gadol has even more restrictions because of his higher sanctity. He may not defile himself to any dead person (even his parents - the only exception is a body that has no one to tend to it. This is known as a MEIT MITZVA) **[271,L168 21:11]** nor enter under a roof with a dead body **[270, L167 21:11]**. The Kohen Gadol's sanctity derives from the anointing oil and/or the special garments he wears. He is to marry a previously unmarried woman **[272,A38 21:13]**. He may not marry a widow **[273,L161 21:14]** nor any of the types of women that the regular kohen is forbidden to marry. He is further forbidden to have relations with a widow **[274, L162 21:15]**, as this would contravene his sanctity.

The Kohen Gadol should (preferably) be smarter (better educated, wiser) than his fellow kohanim, bigger (taller), and wealthier.

One of the Chassidic Masters gave a different spin to the phrase HaKohein HaGadol Mei'Echav (plain meaning is the Kohein who is greater than his brothers, viz. the KG). He said it is the Kohein whose greatness comes from his brothers (Mei'Echav), a Kohein respected and honored by his fellow kohanim.

Levi - Second Aliya 25 p'sukim - 21:16-22:16

[S> 21:16 (9)] A kohen with a disqualifying blemish may not serve in the Mikdash **[275,L70 21:17]**. The Torah next identifies many of the disqualifying blemishes. The rule applies not just to a permanent blemish or deformity, but even to temporary blemishes **[276,L71 21:21]**. A disqualified kohen may eat of the sacred foods (some but not all categories), but may not even enter the Mikdash **[277,L69 21:23]**.

Clarification: A kohen BAAL MUM (with a disqualifying blemish) is barred from the area of the Mikdash from the (external) Altar and inward, but may enter the outer area of the courtyard of the Mikdash, and may even perform some tasks.

[P> 22:1 (16)] Furthermore, a kohen who becomes "tamei" is temporarily barred from the Mikdash **[278,L75 22:2]**, nor may he "approach" sacred foods. He may not eat T'ruma **[279, L136 22:4]** or other "kodoshim" while "tamei" from any of various sources. On the day of impurity (for the 1-day type) or on the last day (for the 7-day type), the kohen immerses in a mikve and, "with stars-out" he once again is allowed to eat T'ruma.

Not only may one not eat non-kosher meat, it also renders a kohen "tamei".

A non-kohen may not eat T'ruma **[280,L133 22:10]** (or other sacred foods specifically designated for the kohanim). Jewish servants and laborers of a kohen may not partake of T'ruma **[281,L134 22:10]**. OTOH, an "Eved K'naani" who is considered part of the kohen's possessions, may eat from his master's T'ruma. An uncircumcised male may not eat T'ruma (even if he has valid medical reasons for being uncircumcised) **[282,L135 22:10]**. This rule is not expressly stated in the text, but is learned by "parallel texts" from Korban Pesach. It is nonetheless one of the 613 mitzvot, note-worthy, in that it is a mitzva with no direct "chapter & verse" to point to.

A kohen's daughter (and any woman) who has relations with someone to whom she is forbidden, may no longer eat T'ruma **[283,L137 22:12]**. This mitzva also includes the situation of a kohen's daughter who marries a non-kohen. During her marriage, she may not eat T'ruma. If her husband dies or divorces her, she may return to her father's home and eat T'ruma - if she has not had children. With children, the fear is she might feed them (her children are NOT kohanim) from the T'ruma. Hence, she too is barred.

A person who inadvertently eats T'ruma must compensate the kohen by paying the value plus an

amount which equals 1/5 of the payment. Eating "tevel" (produce from which none of the required separations was taken) is forbidden for all to eat **[284,L153 22:15]**. Violation constitutes a disgrace of the sacred.

Shlishi - Third Aliya 17 p'sukim - 22:17-33

[P> 22:17 (9)] Animals offered as sacrifices must be blemish-free **[285,A61 22:20]**. It is forbidden to consecrate a blemished animal as a korban **[286,L91 22:21]**. It is also forbidden to make a blemish in a korban **[287, L97 22:21]**. Blemishes referred to are specifically defined by the Torah and Talmud. If a blemished animal is offered, it is additionally forbidden to sprinkle its blood on the Mizbei'ach **[288,L93 22:22]**, or to slaughter (as a korban) a defective animal **[289,L92 22:22]**, nor to place any of the animal's parts on the Mizbei'ach to burn **[290,L94 22:22]**

Castration of animals is forbidden **[291,L361 22:24]**. (This is a serious halachic issue related to house pets. Consult a Rav who knows these things for guidelines.)

A defective animal may not be offered as a korban, even if received from a non-Jew **[292, L96 22:25]**.

[S> 22:26 (8)] From this point

through chapter 23, is the Torah reading for the first day of Sukkot (second day as well, outside of Israel) and the second day of Pesach (our first day of Chol HaMoed. Second day Yom Tov in Chutz LaAretz).

A new-born animal stays with its mother for 7 days and only thereafter (from the 8th day) may be used as a korban [293,A60 22:27].

It is forbidden to slaughter (as korban or for personal use) an animal and its offspring on the same day [294,L101 22:28].

The Torah, once again reminds us that korbanot to be eaten have time limits which must not be exceeded.

Until this point in the sedra, the Torah has dealt with the sacrificer (kohein) and the sacrificee (animals). It now changes gears and we find another meaning of the word sacrifice, as in being willing to die in sanctification of G-d's Name.

We may not desecrate G-d's Name [295,L63 22:32]; we must sanctify His Name [296,A9 22:32]. These mitzvot have many facets. A Jew is required to give up his life rather than violate one of the "big three": murder, incest/adultery and idolatry. In times of "forced conversion", martyrdom is required even for the "least" violation.

R'vi'i - Fourth Aliya 22 p'sukim - 23:1-22

[P> 23:1 (3)] Chapter 23 in Vayikra is the "Portion of the Holidays". It begins with the statement: "These are the Festivals..." Shabbat is presented as the first of the Holidays (we designate it so in Kidush on Friday night when we say that Shabbat is in commemoration of the Exodus and is the first of the "days called Holy").

There is a different understanding of "six days... and on the 7th..." portion, attributed to the Vilna Gaon. This portion is NOT talking about Shabbat. It is a summary of the details about to be presented. There are six holy days that some work is permitted, but on the seventh holy day, it is a Shabbat Shabbaton and all manner of Melacha is forbidden. The six days on which some Melacha is permitted are first and seventh day of Pesach, the one day of Shavuot, the one day of Rosh HaShana, and the first and eighth day of Sukkot. Yom Kippur, of course, is the Shabbat of Shabbats referred to.

[P> 23:4 (5)] On the 14th day of Nissan, the Korban Pesach is brought. On the 15th, begins the Matza Festival (which we call Pesach), "requiring" matza for 7 days. The first is a holy day with most forms of "melacha" forbidden [297,298;A159,L323 23:7].

In each case of a Yom Tov, there is a positive command to abstain from

"melacha", and a prohibition against doing "melacha".

Korban Musaf is to be brought on the 7 days of Pesach [299,A43 23:8]. The seventh day is Yom Tov [300,301; A160,L324 23:8].

[P> 23:9 (6)] Following the first day of Pesach, the Omer (barley-offering) is brought [302,A44 23:10]. Special korbanot are offered on the day of the Omer. One may not eat different forms of new grains until the bringing of the Omer [303,304,305; L189, 190, 191 23:14].

[S> 23:15 (8)] We are to count from the day of the bringing of the Omer a period of 7 weeks - 49 days [306,A161 23:15]. The Torah says 50 days, but we understand it to mean "up to but not including" (because it also says 7 full weeks, and 50 is not divisible by 7, but 49 is).

Following the 49th day, a special offering of two loaves from the new wheat is to be offered [307, A46 23:16]. This is on the holiday of Shavuot which has "melacha" restrictions [308,309; A162,L325 23:21]. This Aliya ends with the reminder of the gifts of the field that must be left for poor people.

Practical point: One should give extra Tzedaka before a Chag so poor people will have Simchat Yom Tov.

Chamishi 5th Aliya 10 p'sukim - 23:23-32

[P> 23:23 (3)] The first day of the 7th month (Tishrei) is holy (Rosh Hashana), "melacha" being forbidden [310,311; A163,L326 23:24, 25]. Special Musaf sacrifices are brought [312,A47 23:25], in addition to the Rosh Chodesh Musaf. Note that Shofar is not counted here, but in Parshat Pinchas. Here Rosh HaShana is referred to as ZICHRON T'RU'A, a remembrance of the T'ru'a. (We use the term Zichron T'ru'a to refer to the day when it coincides with Shabbat, in which case we do NOT blow the Shofar.) In Pinchas, the Torah tells us to have a "T'ru'a day" - that is the command to hear Shofar-blowing [405,A170].

[P> 23:26 (7)] The tenth of Tishrei is Yom Kippur. One must fast [313,A164 23:27]. There is a Korban Musaf to be brought on Yom Kippur [314,A48 23:27], (in addition to the Yom Kippur service described in Achrei). Eating or drinking (without a valid excuse) is punishable by excision (death and more, from Heaven). ALL "melacha" is forbidden [315, L329 23:28], as are eating and drinking on Yom Kippur [316, L196 23:29]. We must abstain from (Shabbat-like "melacha" on Yom Kippur [317, A165 23:32].

Shishi - Sixth Aliya 12 p'sukim - 23:33-44

[P> 23:33 (12)] The 15th of Tishrei is Sukkot, a 7-day holiday. "Melacha", (referring to most of the Shabbat restrictions, with the well-known Yom Tov exceptions) is forbidden on its first day [318, 319;A166,L327 23:35]. Musaf sacrifices are to be brought on each of the 7 days [320,A50 23:36]. The eighth day (sometimes Shmini Atzeret, a.k.a. Simchat Torah, is viewed as its own holiday; sometimes as the 8th day of Sukkot) is also a Yom Tov [321,322; A167,L328 23:36] with korban musaf of its own [323, A51 23:36].

These are the Holidays, besides the Shabbatot of the year and other offerings to the Beit HaMikdash. It is at the harvest time in the fall that Succot is to be celebrated.

On the first day we are required to take the four species (lulav, etrog, hadasim, aravot) [324, A169 23:40]

During the holiday of Sukkot, we are to dwell in sukkot [325,A168 23:42]. This is in order to instruct all generations about the aftermath of the Exodus when we were privileged to Divine protection in the wilderness.

Sh'VII - Seventh Aliya 23 p'sukim - 24:1-23

[P> 24:1 (4)] G-d tells Moshe to command the people to prepare pure virgin olive oil for lighting the Menorah, always. The lamps of the Menorah burned through each and every night, right outside the dividing curtain (Parochet) between the Sanctuary and the Holy of Holies.

The juxtaposition of the Festivals and the lighting of the Menorah is taken as a hint to Chanuka from the Torah. What even makes the point stronger is the Torah's stress on the concept that the lights of the Menorah are constant, eternal, through the generations. The Menorah of the Beit HaMikdash has not made it through the generations. (We, of course look forward to its being lit daily in the third Beit HaMikdash.) The Chanuka lights have made it through the generations and continue to do so!

[P> 24:5 (5)] We are also to take fine flour and bake 12 loaves (matza rules) which are placed on the Shulchan in the Mikdash. This too was a permanent fixture in the Beit HaMikdash. The loaves were exchanged weekly, on Shabbat (having been baked on Friday, unless it was a Yom Tov - then the baking was on Erev Yom Tov). The kohanim on duty would share the loaves that were replaced by the new ones. This mitzva was counted back in Parshat T'ruma, when the Shulchan was first described.

[S> 24:10 (3)] In an abrupt

change of subjects, the Torah next tells us of the son of a Jewess and an Egyptian who "blessed" G-d's name. He was incarcerated pending word from G-d on how to punish him. The command was to stone him to death. This is to be the punishment for "blessing G-d".

So too, murder is a capital offense.

Killing an animal requires compensation to the owner.

Causing injury to a person requires compensation based on factors resulting from the injury.

The execution of the "curser" was carried out, as commanded by G-d through Moshe.

The three last p'sukim are repeated for the Maftir.

Haftara 17 p'sukim Yechezkeil 44:15-31

Yechezkel, himself a kohen whose early days were spent in the Beit HaMikdash, prophesies the rebuilding of the Mikdash and the restoration of the active kehuna. He reiterates many of the rules of the kohen, many of which are based in Parshat Emor. Interestingly, some of his rules are stricter than required by Torah law, but suited the conditions of his time. Yechezkeil restates the marriages permitted and forbidden to a kohen. He says that a kohen cannot marry a divorcee (true) nor

a widow (not so; only the K.G. may not marry a widow). But he adds that a kohen may marry a widow of a kohen. Apparently, by not allowing a kohen of the time to marry a widow of a non-kohen, the community would take care of its widows in a better way. To apply the halachic details to the future, on a permanent basis is problematic in light of the immutability of the Torah. They can be considered "for the moment" or possibly they could be considered chumrot.

In addition to the obvious Kohein, Beit HaMikdash, Tum'a/Tahara connections between sedra and haftara, there is another connection. The haftara charges kohanim with teaching the people and clarifying for them G-d's laws. Specific mention is made of the laws of the Holidays and Shabbat - which is a major part of the sedra.

Torah T'mima (the other TT) explains why ZICHRON T'RU'A (alluding to Shabbat - RH) occurs before YOM T'RU'A in Parshat Pinchas. The Gemara says that the first Pesach was a Thursday. It follows based on our calendar, that the first RH was Shabbat, hence ZICHRON T'RU'A comes first.

Our Sages say that he who eats and drinks on Erev Yom Kippur and fasts on YK, it is as if he fasted on both days. Says the Admor of Gur, that explains Vidui at Mincha of Erev Yom Kippur.

Divrei Menachem

Parshat Emor opens with an injunction addressed to Moshe who is to address the Kohanim, as follows: "Say (EMOR) to the Kohanim, the sons of Aharon, and tell (V'AMARTA) them - 'Each of you shall not contaminate himself [through contact with] a person among his people."

Instead of the more frequent and harsher form of speech "DABER", the repeated use of the softer "EMOR" - to say or to tell - indicates that there is a very special message that goes beyond the superficial text. Our rabbis initially understand that the sanctified Kohanim, the teachers of the people, who lived in the tradition of being "lovers of peace and pursuers of peace", should desist from becoming contaminated by a dead body, the highest form of Tum'a. The kohanim were to maintain the highest standards of purity and integrity.

For the Ramban, however, the softer tone of speech and the seeming redundancy suggest that the Kohanim are being asked to behave in a manner alien to their natural tendency. One superb cautionary note was offered by Rav Dov Be'er, the Magid of Mezeritch, who advised pure and liberal-minded do-gooders not to be contaminated by their own self-satisfied and self-righteous postures. Or to paraphrase the Seer of Lublin - not to let the search for peace (with certain types of people) lead to a corruption of the soul. This certainly has a familiar ring today.

VEBBE REBBE

QUESTION: *It has happened that religious Jews have been tried and/or sent to jail for criminal activity in America. Some rabbis have called on the broad Jewish community to pray for them or petition authorities for their release. Is this a traditional Jewish approach?*

ANSWER: Praying for Jews in "royal jails" is traditional, and is included in the prayer: "Acheinu ... ha'omdim batzara u'vashivya... HaMakom yerachem aleihem v'yotzi'eim..." (our brethren... who are in trouble and in captivity... Hashem should have mercy on them and extricate them...). The assumption was usually that they were imprisoned on false or exaggerated charges.

The first question is whether in a place like America, with a much more fair judicial system than we had through most of our dispersion, our approach to a convict is different. We certainly prefer even flawed governmental law enforcement to anarchy (Avot 3:2). One of the Noahide laws is to have a judicial system, at least to enforce Noahide laws (Rambam, Melachim 9:14), and likely to generally do justice (Ramban to Bereishit 34:13), and the law of the land applies to Jews also (Gittin 10b; Shulchan Aruch, Choshen Mishpat 369). The question is how we view punishments the courts mete out in excess of what halacha dictates for Jews. For

example, how do we feel about a Jew being put into jail (often a cruel and dangerous place) for tax evasion, when Sanhedrin would not use such harsh punishment for a monetary crime? May/should a Jew inform the government when a fellow Jew is violating such a crime? Contemporary poskim argue the point, as presented cogently in an article by Rabbi Michael Broyde (www.jlaw.com/articles/mesiralaw2.html). The matter is too involved for our context.

Is it legitimate to pray on behalf of an accused or convicted Jew, assuming the act that he was caught for is a sin either due to the law of the land or even Torah law, which do overlap? There are sources about not praying for resha'im (evil people), but it seems that those discuss qualitatively more sinful people than the average white-collar criminal. We pray for the health and welfare of all sorts of people regardless of their level of piety, and this need not be an exception. As far as speaking on his behalf, it is not always practically useful but character references to influence the severity of the sentence are part of the US judicial system.

The biggest issue is public perception. We regret the existence of (religious) Jewish criminals, decry their actions, and lend our support to the judicial system that convicts them. We do not want to blur these stances in the eyes of our children and communities.

Another obvious problem is (potential) Chilul Hashem (desecration of G-d's name), which has a major halachic

impact, including relations with the non-Jewish world (see Shulchan Aruch, CM 266:1). Exaggeratedly strong support can falsely portray a criminal as a Jewish hero, before and/or after his crime. Since countless Jews could use mass prayers for all sorts of difficulties, turning a convicted person into a national cause sends a wrong message. The matter is complicated when he really has earned the community's appreciation for other matters.

Another way the public can see it (if not presented carefully or distorted by anti-Semites) is that the Jewish community questions the judicial system's integrity, which can cause a Chilul Hashem that can exacerbate anti-Semitism. Of course, it has happened that the totally innocent have been convicted, whether due to an honest mistake, belligerent anti-Semitism, or some combination thereof, of the police, a judge, or a jury. Jewish people have also received disproportionately strict sentences. However, the overall system is a fair one, and we can unfortunately not assume that a convicted religious Jew must be innocent. In cases (such as Pollard's) where there are demonstrable grounds for grievance, this is less of an issue, and American Jews do not always need to be silent when their own are abused. However, this is an issue for the local Jewish leadership to weigh in on.

Rav Daniel Mann, Eretz Hemdah Institute

From A Measure of Barley to 2 Loaves of Wheat [1]

by **Dr. Meir Tamari**

The night following the Seder, at the beginning of Chol HaMoed, each individual starts counting days and weeks till we complete 7 full weeks, 49 days. This is a type of counting that has spiritually elevating goals that are to be reached through the medium of physical and material possessions both of the individual Jew and of the nation-collective. It is a counting that nowadays is observed also together with other rituals which, at first glance seem unrelated, but can be shown to be ideologically and spiritually closely associated with this Sefirat HaOmer.

"It is a positive [Torah] mitzva to count seven weeks from the day of bringing Korban HaOmer [waive offering of an omer-measure of barley], as is it written 'from the day that you bring the waive offering you shall count seven complete weeks' (Vayikra 23:15)" (mitzvat asef 161; Hilkhos T'midim 7: 22-25). Ramban, argues that since the Bet HaMikdash was destroyed, this counting is not D'Oraita because of the korban itself as Rambam rules, but rather as a memorial of the Temple service. Nevertheless, both authorities clearly see the reason for Sefirat HaOmer as being the offering of a measure of barley to the Temple. Furthermore, the whole structure of the prayers connected with Sefira bear this out. After the counting there is "HaRachaman, may He restore the

Temple service to its place speedily in our days", followed by a Psalm (Thilim 67) that is a thanksgiving by the peoples of the world for the harvests of the earth.

Clearly the personal, social and spiritual growth and responsibility marked by the final Ribono shel Olam has to be understood in the light of this offering of barley, as indeed must the special significance of cleansing given to this period by the mystics. Such understanding may reveal the uniqueness of Judaism in its integration of spirituality and religiosity with the mundane and material.

Following the 2 verses commanding Pesach the Torah writes, "When you shall come into the Land which I give unto you [that is the purpose of Yetziat Mitzrayim] and you reap, you shall bring the first Omer to the kohen" (Vayikra 23:10). Barley is a coarser grain which grows in soils and climates impossible for the cultivation of wheat so that it is cheaper and more likely to be used for animal feed, whereas wheat is reserved for the finer and more sophisticated human consumption. The bringing of the offering of barley at Pesach would seem to correspond to the physical, spiritual and material aspects of slavery redeemed by the season of our freedom and exodus from galut. Just as Pesach is the first basic step in the creation of the nation-religion that is Judaism, so the Omer of barley that ripens earlier than the other grains, is the first basic step in educating and elevating the materialism represented

by our wealth and our possessions. "G-d gave Israel great wealth when we left Egypt and even added to it at Kriat Yam Suf, but then gave us Torah at Sinai, to teach us how He desires us to earn and live with our wealth" (S. R. Hirsch). "At the Seder we tell the wise son that we do not eat anything after the Afikoman. This teaches us that unlike the rest of the world, our freedom does not signify license and unbridled enjoyment but rather that the use and enjoyment of everything has permitted and forbidden aspects, limits and controls" (Reb Aharonu of Belz).

We were freed from slavery to Par'o so that we could become the nation subservient to Hashem. Korban HaOmer is an appropriate expression of subservience of our legally earned crops and wealth, to the truths desired by Hashem. The offering is called Minchat Bikurim in parshat Vayikra, denoting thanks-offering but here it is called 'omer' denoting servitude or employment, and is waived to the 4 corners of the world to express the universality of this subservience. Indeed, Korban HaOmer combines within itself these two concepts; "The essence of the mitzva is to reflect through the act of bringing the Omer, on the great kindness He does with His human beings in renewing the produce of grain [conceptually, all our wealth and material possessions] that is the basis of all our sustenance. Since the grains are something needed by all it is fitting to write this in the mitzvot imposed on all Israel. [However there are three further mitzvot], so it is

forbidden to eat of the new crop, chadash, before the end of the 16th of Nissan. It is proper to bring an offering to G-d who has gives sustenance, before humans enjoy their benefits [so to speak, to pay the real owner for the use of His property]. This is in keeping with what our Sages taught, 'whoever has a benefit from this world without a bracha commits a breach of holiness' (B'rachot 35a)" (Sefer HaChinuch 302-306).

"The Heavens are Heavens for G-d and the Earth He gave to the sons of Man' (Thilim); to make of the Earth, Heaven" (Menachem Mendel of Kotsk)

Parsha Points to Ponder

by **Rabbi Dov Lipman**

EMOR

1) Why does the Torah have to give a special command to the Kohanim not to pull out hairs over the death of loved ones (21:5) if that command actually exists for all Jews (D'varim 14:1)?

2) Why does the Torah use the peculiar language of A MAN FROM YOUR SEED when introducing the laws of blemishes for Kohanim and not the usual CHILDREN OF AHARON as we find in the laws preceding these commands (21:1) and the commands immediately after (22:2)?

3) Why does the Torah need to tell us that the laws of the Omer are FOR ALL YOUR GENERATIONS (L'DOROTEICHEM - 23:21)?

EMOR

Becoming a Kohein

In every group, there is one person who stands out as special. In childhood, it is often the kid with the greatest athletic prowess. Later in life, different attributes begin to qualify a person to become the group's star.

In my post-high school peer group, many years ago on Manhattan's Lower East Side, we had one such towering figure. I use the word "towering" literally, because he was well over six feet tall. He had jet-black hair, which turned the heads of all the young ladies who passed him by. He had an outstanding academic record and seemed to earn his grades effortlessly.

As our group began to disperse with each of us going off to different colleges and yeshivot, he announced that he was accepted into a very prestigious university across the country. He was so distinctive and distinguished that, although he was not born into the priestly tribe, we called him "the Kohen".

In this week's Torah portion, Emor, we learn about the kohanim and their special role in the Jewish nation. This is certainly not the first time that we have encountered them in our Torah readings. We already know that they stem from the tribe of

Levi and descend from Aharon, brother of Moshe. We have learned that they were charged with the performance of the sacrificial rites and other Temple practices. But this week, for the first time, we learn about the restrictions that are imposed upon them, especially with regard to their permission to come into contact with the dead.

We also learn that the rest of us, not born into the kohen's tribe, are required to "sanctify" them, and to treat them deferentially. "And you must treat them as holy..." (Vayikra 21:8) "To be first in every way, and to offer the first blessing at the meal" (Rashi, ibid.). They are to receive the honor of being first in many activities, especially in the ceremonies of leading Birkat HaMazon and being called to the Torah.

Sociologists distinguish between two kinds of roles in society; those which are "ascribed" to us by others, and those which we "achieve" ourselves by virtue of our own efforts and accomplishments. The kohen's role is clearly an ascribed one. Once a kohen, always a kohen, and unless he is guilty of truly egregious behaviors, he does not lose his status or forfeit his privileges.

One of the most remarkable features of our people is that we still have kohanim. So proud were the kohanim over all the generations that the "kohanic" identity has been passed from father to son for millennia. Indeed, genetic evidence seems to confirm the validity of this verbal communication down the

ages by isolating a "kohen gene".

But Judaism also recognizes other paths to privileged status that depend upon personal achievements and hard work, and are not ascribed at birth. These are statuses that must be earned and are not determined by one's genetic endowment. Indeed, the Talmud recognizes the equality, if not superiority, of the talmid chacham to the Kohen Gadol. Greater respect is shown for the person whose piety and erudition earned him his status than to one who gained the role of Kohen Gadol by virtue of his genealogy.

During the past few weeks, many of us have been transfixed by the events surrounding the wedding of a member of the British royal family; a perfect example of how prominence, grandeur, and glory redound to an individual whose position is ascribed by his lineage, and not achieved by his accomplishments. It would seem that even in our day and age, we are captivated by those who are born to their positions.

But how much more deserving of our reverence and respect is the "low-born" person who has achieved his prominence by virtue of his hard work. In this sense, all of us are potentially kohanim, even if our genealogy is not comprised of ancestors from the tribe of Levi and who are not descendent from Moshe or Aharon.

As is often the case, it was Maimonides who said it best: "Not just the tribe of Levi, but every

inhabitant of the world whose inspiration and intellect guide him to stand before the Almighty, to serve Him and to know Him... is elevated to sanctity and holiness... and deserves the same material privileges as the kohanim..." (Mishneh Torah, Laws of Sh'mita & Yovel 13:13)

Praying with Passion

Giving more meaning to our T'fillah
One Week at a Time

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P'sukei d'Zimra: ASHREI The Message of Generations

בְּכֹל יוֹם אֲבָרְכֶךָ, וְאַהֲלִלָה שְׁמֶךָ לְעוֹלָם
וָעֶד. גָּדוֹל יְיָ וּמְהֻלָּל מְאֹד, וְלִגְדֻלְתּוֹ אֵין
חֶקֶר. דּוֹר לְדוֹר יִשְׁבַּח מְעֻשֵׂיךָ,
וּגְבוּרֹתֶיךָ יִגְדִּינּוּ.

Meaning: translation...

Every day I will bless You, and I will laud Your Name forever and ever. Hashem is great and exceedingly lauded, and His greatness is beyond investigation. **Each generation will praise Your deeds to the next, and of Your mighty deeds they will tell.**

Theme:

An essential concept of the prayer

Passing It On

Each generation will praise Hashem's mighty deeds and relate them to the next generation.

Insight: Deeper meanings...

A Resounding Message

In recounting Hashem's greatness, why is it necessary to pass this knowledge on to the next generation? One of the most essential components of Judaism is called MESORAH, the transmitting of the Torah from the generation at Mount Sinai to the succeeding generations.

Kuzari explains that while other religions began with a purported revelation to a single prophet, Judaism states that G-d revealed Himself to the entire nation of 600,000 men at Mount Sinai. Although a single charismatic individual can perhaps create a religion based on his claim, is it possible for 600,000 men to agree on a fabrication? If the story of the Revelation at Mount Sinai were untrue, there would certainly have been many denying the story, and it could never have gained credibility.

When masses of people experience or witness something, and entrust the next generation with the knowledge of what happened, that is called history.

We know that there was an American Revolution, and that Napoleon was defeated at Waterloo, all by virtue of the fact that the events were witnessed by large numbers of people. Individuals can fabricate things, but masses cannot. For when many people claim that something happened to, or in front of them, if in truth it did not, others will stand up and heartily dispute the contention.

The historical tradition of the events at Mount Sinai could not have been fabricated, suddenly "made up" one day, because it involved hundreds of thousands of people whose children were solemnly entrusted with the account and sworn to entrust it in turn to their own children, and theirs to theirs... down to our own generation. As the Chinuch states: "Ein adam morish sheker l'vanav -- a man does not transmit lies to his children."

The passage of time does not weaken the historical veracity of this event. On the contrary, so powerful was the memory of the receiving of the Torah at Mt. Sinai, that it has been preserved through thick and thin, throughout the long and bitter exile up until today.

Visualize:

Images that bring the prayer to life

For Posterity

A man possesses a silver Kiddush cup. It belonged to an ancestor from 20 generations ago, and is inscribed with his initials. The ancestor was a famous rabbi of his times, and although his writings had been lost, this Kiddush cup had survived.

The family passed it on from first-born to first-born throughout the generations. Each new owner received the heirloom with reverence and excitement, for it was not only a beautiful object, but a constant reminder of the holy ancestor whose initials it bore.

Likewise, our inheritance -- our

knowledge of Hashem and His mighty deeds -- is passed down to each new generation with reverence and care, and received by each new generation with an understanding of the incredible beauty and value with which they have been entrusted.

Word to the Wise:

Meaning within the word

V'LIGDULATO EIN

CHEIKER ...and His greatness is beyond investigation.

The Brisker Rav was once asked how the mitzva of EMUNAH will be expressed when Moshiach comes and the "land will be filled with knowledge of Hashem, just as water covers the sea." (Yeshayahu 11:9). If everyone knows the truth and recognizes Hashem, what will require belief?

He answered that there will always be a need for EMUNAH because Hashem is infinite, and therefore, there will always be aspects of His greatness that finite Man cannot comprehend.

(Adapted from Nefesh Shimshon, Gates of Emunah, Feldheim, p. 89).

The Puah Institute

for Fertility and Gynecology in Accordance with Halacha

Natural Medicine - A Historical Perspective

The use of natural remedies is by no means a new phenomena. In the time of the Mishna the instruction was to seek the advice of doctors and to follow the conventional medical

advice of the time. The Mishna states that one of the basic requirements of any city is the presence of a doctor. However there were people who sought out other "medical" alternatives and the Sages of the Mishna had to relate to halachic questions that arose due to using such treatments.

"One is permitted to carry (on Shabbat where there is no eruv) the egg of a locust, the tooth of a fox or a nail since this is medical treatment, says Rabbi Meir. The Rabbis did not permit it even during the week since this is considered the ways of the Emori (idolatrous)." (Mishna Shabbat 6:10) The Gemara explains that anything that is a medical treatment cannot be considered the ways of the Emori, and so the Rabbis disagree with Rabbi Meir's position that these natural remedies can be included in the category of medicine that would permit them to be performed and not considered idolatrous, and would also enable them to be used on Shabbat.

Rashi explains that "medical treatment" must be something that can be observed and seen to heal, "such as drinking a cup (of medicine) or a bandage on a wound, however regarding reciting a spell we cannot see how it heals." A possible alternative translation of Rashi would be that we do not observe that it helps.

According to this explanation of Rashi we can now begin to define a medicine. It must be something that has a logical medical explanation. If a drug affects a certain muscle and

alleviates the pain then we can comprehend how it should work and heal. However with alternative medicines the pathway of healing is less obvious and possible to understand. Thus it would be outside the definition of a medicine. Some alternative medicines can be explained logically and medically. Acupuncture affects blood flow and so can be "proven" to help and heal.

The other possible translation of Rashi speaks about observing the benefit of the treatment. If we see that in clinical trials it has a significant benefit then it can be considered medicine. This does not mean that we can bring up one or two cases where something helped, that is not considered any sort of proof and no drug would be allowed to go on the market under such conditions. This requires an actual charted improvement and should really be compared with a control group who received a placebo instead of the actual treatment. There are very few such natural medicines on the market. This does not mean that one cannot avail themselves of natural medicine, however, when there is the question of transgressing a prohibition, a non-tested treatment would not be permitted.

More on this next week

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 by **Rabbi Chanan Morrison**
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Kohanim and the Illusion of Death

Adapted from Orot HaKodesh vol. II, p. 380

God told Moshe, "Speak to the kohanim, the descendants of Aharon. Let no [kohen] defile himself [by contact] with a dead soul among his people. (Vayikra 21:1)

Why are kohanim not allowed to come in contact with a dead body? Why does the Torah refer to the dead person as a "dead soul"? After all, it is the body that dies, not the soul!

The Parable of Twin Brothers

In his book on Jewish mourning practices, Geshet Hachayim, Rabbi Tukachinsky used the following parable to explain the Jewish view on life after death:

Twin brothers, fetuses in their mother's womb, enjoyed a carefree life. Their world was dark and warm and protected. These twins were alike in all aspects but one. One brother was a "believer": he believed in an afterlife, in a future reality much different from their current, miniature

universe. The second brother, however, was a skeptic. All he knew was the familiar world of the womb. Anything besides what he could feel and sense was only an illusion. The skeptic tried to talk some sense into his brother. He warned him to be realistic, but to no avail. His naive brother insisted on believing in an extraordinary world that exists after life in the womb, a world so immense and fantastic that it transcends their wildest dreams.

The months passed, and the fatal moment arrived. Labor began. The fetuses became aware of tremendous contractions and shifting in their little world. The freethinker recognized that "this is it!". His short but pleasant life was about to end. He felt the forces pressuring him to go down, but fought against them. He knew that outside the womb, a cruel death awaited, with no protective sack and no umbilical cord. Suddenly, he realized that his naive brother was giving in to the forces around them. His brother was sinking lower!

"Don't give up!" he cried, but his twin took no heed. "Where are you, my dear brother?" He shuddered as he heard the screams from outside the womb. His poor brother had met his cruel fate. How naive he had been, with his foolish belief in a bigger, better world!

Then the skeptic felt the uterine muscles pushing him out, against his will, into the abyss. He screamed out...

"Mazal Tov!" called out the doctor. "Two healthy baby boys!"

The Illusion of Death

Rav Kook wrote:

Death is a false illusion; its defilement is due to its deceptive nature. What people call "death" is in fact the intensification of life. Because man wallows in pettiness, he pictures this increase of life in a pained, black fashion, which he calls "death".

The kohanim in their holiness are able to rise above this falsehood. Yet, falsehood and deception rule over the world. In order to overcome the illusion of death, the kohanim must limit their exposure to death. They need to protect themselves from those images that impress the soul with deceiving messages.

The word "soul" in the verse does not refer to soul of the dead person. It refers to the soul of the kohen. This is how the verse should be understood: "For the sake of the soul, the kohen shall not defile himself among his people" - for the sake of the kohen's soul, he must distance and protect himself from death and its illusions.

Ballpoint pen עט כדורי

Cartridge (what we usually call a refill which it isn't, the first time around) מכל-דין

Refill מילוי

Here's the one to test your Israeli friends:

Clip תיק

From **"OzTorah"**
 by **Rabbi Dr Raymond Apple**
 AO RFD, Emeritus Rabbi of
 the Great Synagogue, Sydney
 www.oztorah.com

EMOR

If I were a rich man...

Sometimes Hebrew verbs are followed by lecha or lachem, "for yourself" or "for yourselves". This form, called the ethical dative, gives a verb a reflexive sense, as in lech-lecha, "get thee out".

Two ethical datives come in this week's sedra. One relates to Sukkot: **ULKACHTEM LACHEM**, "take for yourselves the fruit of a goodly tree" (Vayikra 23:40). The second refers to the Omer: **USFARTEM LACHEM**, "count for yourselves seven complete weeks" (23:15).

On the Sukkot law, the rabbis said LACHEM means MISHELACHEM, "of your own": the four plants taken on Sukkot must be your own, not someone else's.

But in which way can counting the Omer require that the days be "our own"? Can days be stolen?

In a sense the answer is yes. It is tempting to wish to live other people's lives, to say you would rather be the other person and have their advantages and opportunities.

"If I were a rich man", says the song: but what if you are not a rich man and not likely to be? To anyone who envies someone else's life, the Torah may be saying, "Live your own life, count your own days, rejoice in being you!"

Rabbi Zusya said, "In the world to come they will not ask me, 'Why were you not Avraham?' – for I am not Avraham! They will not ask, 'Why were you not Moshe?' – for I am not Moshe! They will ask, 'Why were you not Zusya?'... and I am not sure I shall know what to answer!"

...וְאִשָּׁה זָרוּעָה מֵאִשְׁתָּהּ לֹא יִקְוּוּ...

... and a woman divorced from her husband... Classic example of the significance of sounding the MAPIK HEI. ISHA = woman. ISHAHHH = her husband. Without aspirating the HEI with the dot, the meaning changes.

אִפְּהָ מוֹעֲדֵי ה' מִקְרָאֵי קֹדֶשׁ
 אֲשֶׁר-תִּקְרְאוּ אֹתָם בְּמוֹעֲדָם:

This pasuk from Parshat Emor is said by some in the Yom Tov daytime Kiddush. Furthermore, the phrase MIKRA'EI KODESH, which occurs three times in the Portion of the Festivals (in Emor), finds itself in the Friday night Kiddush.

The word MIKRA'EI by itself should be accented on the last syllable, MILRA. By the rule of NASOG ACHOR, the accent should have

receded to the next-to the last syllable in the above phrase, because the following word is MIL'EIL.

mik-ra-El should become mik-RA-ei KO-desh - a classic example of NASOG ACHOR.

But it doesn't happen here. mik-ra-El stays MILRA, and the phrase reads mik-ra-El KO-desh. This is not as smooth to say or hear as mik-RA-ei KO-desh would have been. But NASOG ACHOR does not happen here (for some unknown* reason).

If you are trying to fine-tune your pronunciation of Hebrew, pay attention to how you and others actually say mik-ra-El KO-desh and try to do it correctly.

* Unknown to those who don't know a reason

Maharal on the Sedra

Building the King's House and Garden

Vayikra 23:22 - And when you harvest the harvest of your land, do not finish the corner of your field, and do not glean the gleanings of your harvest. Leave them for the poor and the stranger - I am Hashem your God.

Rashi: This commandment is repeated here to obligate the transgressor twice. Rabbi Avdimi said in Rabbi Yosef's name: Why is it fitting to place this commandment in the midst of the holidays, Pesach and Shavuot on one side and Rosh

Hashana and Yom Kippur on the other? It is to teach you that one who properly gives leket, shikcha and pe'ah is considered to have built the Holy Temple and offered his sacrifices in its midst.

Gur Arye: Offering a sacrifice is giving one's money to Hashem. It is called AVODA [service, work], for a servant is owned by his master, and any wealth he has belongs to that master. When the servant of Hashem brings Him a sacrifice, he admits that what he "owns" belongs to Hashem. Similarly, giving charity in the form of leket, shikcha, and pe'ah amounts to the giving of his wealth to the poor, which is like an offering to Hashem, as it is written [Mishlei 19:17], "the giver to the poor is lending to Hashem." Borrowing does not pertain to the poor, who have no means to repay, but the gift to the poor will be repaid by Hashem, who compensates the deficiencies of His creatures. Therefore, Hashem is obliged to "repay" the "loan" of he who gives to the poor.

The gifts of our verse are distinct from the generic charitable gifts that Torah requires [D'varim 16:11], for these latter are free willed gifts, gratuities [chanina], involving mercy for the recipient. But the gifts obligated by our verse decreed as an obligation are certainly a higher order commandment. The stronger the commandment, the more praiseworthy its accomplishment, as the rabbis said [Kiddushin 31a], "one who is commanded and does, is greater

than one who does without having been commanded." The reason for this is that the one commanded fulfills Hashem's will.

What can we compare this to? Consider two men. One builds a house for the king and the other builds a garden. Because the house is needed and used by the king, it is dearer to him than the garden, in which he only occasionally strolls. If Hashem specifically obligates us to give leket, shikcha and pe'ah, giving it is a direct fulfillment of His will. In other words, the "commanded" house/leket are examples of the Prime Cause [Ila] driving the deed, while the "not-commanded"/garden/charity represent examples of people [alui] driven deeds. The former are closer and dearer to Him.

A free-will gift to the poor is not a sacrifice, but rather a loan to Hashem, as it is written, "the giver to the poor is lending to Hashem." But the giving in our verse is decreed, required, compulsory, a total gift to Him, a complete fulfillment of His will, a true sacrifice.

Column prepared by Dr. Moshe Kahr

ParshaPix explanations

- 📖 Kohen Gadol. The whole first section of the sedra deals with the sanctity of the kohanim in general, and the Kohen Gadol in particular. The term HAKOHEIN HAGADOL occurs 21 times in Tanach, with its first use in Parshat Emor and three further times in the book of Bamidbar. The other 17 times are scattered in Tanach.
- 📖 The broken foot is representative of the invalidating defects of a Kohen (some blemishes permanent and some transitory - both invalidate the kohein from Avoda).
- 📖 Look closely at the lamb the (broken) foot is pointing to. It's missing an ear. That's a blemish which invalidates the animal for the Mizbei'ach. Note that blemishes that disqualify an animal for the Mizbei'ach do not necessarily make the animal a TREIFA (some do).
- 📖 Middle-bottom are a mother sheep (ewe) and her newborn, which may not be taken from its mother to be used as a korban until it is at least 8 days old.
- 📖 AND, the sheep and lamb also represent OTO V'ET B'NO, the prohibition of slaughtering an animal and its offspring on the same day. Note that the 8th day rule is specifically for korbanot

while the two-generation rule applies to holy animals and to profane animals.

- 📖 Just for fun we added Marlin and Nemo from Finding Nemo to also represent OTO V'ET B'NO, although this prohibition does not apply to fish (but it does apply to male or female parent and offspring).
- 📖 Upper-left of center is a negation circle, indicating the prohibitions of building, sewing, writing - representative of all forbidden Melacha for Shabbat, Yom Kippur, and Yom Tov.
- 📖 The counting of the Omer is a mitzva from Parshat Emor.
- 📖 So too are the mitzvot of dwelling in a Sukka for the seven days of Sukkot,
- 📖 and the taking of the Four Species on Sukkot.
- 📖 And there are the Two Loaves of Shavuot.
- 📖 which can also represent Lechem Mishneh for Shabbat (and Yom Tov), which is also in the sedra (not the Lechem Mishna - just Shabbat and Yom Tov).
- 📖 The matzot can represent Pesach, but also stand for the Lechem HaPanim, dealt with in the sedra. They had to be made according to matza rules.
- 📖 There is a wine bottle with Y/N on

the label (No, it's not for YAYIN). Y is for YES - yes, have wine on Shabbat and the Chagim for Kiddush and havdala. Not only that, when you say Kiddush on Yom Tov day, recite one or both of two p'sukim that come from Emor. But N is for NO. No, a kohein may not drink wine when he has service to perform in the Beit HaMikdash. No one may enter the Mikdash "under the influence". Nor, may a poseik render a halachic opinion after having drunk wine.

- 📖 There is a MOOSE with an arrow pointing to his nose, which is AF in Hebrew. So this friend of Bullwinke, Tuke and Rutt represents the MOOSE-AF, MUSAF of each holiday, as commanded by the Torah, partly from Parshat Emor and partly from Parshat Pinchas.
- 📖 There is a needle and an eye right under the eye of the needle, representing AYIN TACHAT AYIN.
- 📖 Right after Parshat HaMoadim (Vayikra 23), we have the command to light the Menora in the Mikdash with pure olive oil. This is seen as a REMEZ, hint to Chanuka from the Torah. (One of several REMAZIM.) Hence the dreidel in the PP.
- 📖 The numeral 1 refers to the haftara, where reference is made to Bikurim, T'ruma, Challa, and other gifts of the FIRSTS to the kohanim.

And then there is a fraction consisting of a numerator of .8 and a denominator of .016. Simplifying the fraction by dividing, we get 50, which has a connection to the sedra, but that wasn't the main point of the TTriddle. .8 (which is 4/5), and .016 (which is the same as 2/125), are both fractions. In Hebrew, each is a SHEVER. So .8/.016 is SHEVER TACHAT SHEVER, which precedes AYIN TACHAT AYIN in Vayikra 24:20.

The NER TAMID is towards the end of the sedra where the Torah discusses the olive oil for the Menora. Its light is meant to be TAMID, always, and one possible origin of the NER TAMID in shul is this eternal quality of the Menora.

The term MEIT referring to a dead body, can be found in the sedra and the haftara. In Ashkenazic pronunciation, that would be MEIS, as in MACE, the medieval weapon, the mace. In the Israeli pronunciation, it is MEIT as in MATE, short for checkmate. The white queen has checkmated the black king in the part of the chessboard visible in the ParshaPix.

The Xed out Shofar is for the term found in Emor (as opposed to Pinchas), which describes Rosh Ha-Shana as ZICHRON T'RU'A. Some say the alludes to Shabbat RH.

The MazalPic, at H(S)M's suggestion is Eeyore (pronounced like the month). Obvious, but cute...

**The Jerusalem Institute
of Jewish Law
Rabbi Emanuel Quint, Dean**

Lesson # 559

Laws of Sales (2)

The Rabbis of the Mishna and Talmud, and the codes and commentaries and response literature discuss a variance from “the price”. The Rabbis of the Mishna and Talmud determined that:

(1) If the discrepancy from “the price” is exactly one-sixth, the sale is effective but the benefiting party, whether the seller or the buyer, will have to reimburse the wronged party for such one-sixth variance.) Exactly one-sixth is the maximum discrepancy that the halacha will tolerate and still have the sale be effective. There are other opinions in the Talmud, such as one-third, one-twelfth, and one-twenty-fourth variance from the price (Baba Metzia 49b-50b).

(2) If the discrepancy from “the price” is less than one-sixth, the discrepancy is disregarded and the transaction is effective without any adjustment in the price.

(3) If the discrepancy from “the price” exceeds one-sixth, the sale is voidable by the wronged party, whether the seller or the buyer. The Talmud, codes and commentaries speak of overcharging or undercharging from “the price”.

Nowhere is “the price” defined. Each community must set its own rules how the price is to be determined.

There are exceptions to the applicability of the rules of discrepancy in price. Any variance from a fixed price, as distinguished from “the price” is not part of the tiers of discrepancy which we are discussing. Any variance whatsoever from a fixed price is treated as an actionable breach, since the wronged party may sue the benefiting party to recover the overcharge or undercharge, no matter how small. However, the wronged party may not rescind the sale. In communities where there are fixed or normal market prices, the seller may plead that his selling price need be greater and these prices are not applicable to him since his cost of selling is higher than the average or median. In determining the seller's market price, the halacha speaks of allowing the seller to include the cost to purchase the item, such expenses as transportation and delivery cost; travel expenses for himself including hotel stays, storage costs, rent and labor costs that are recognized in the community to be accounted as expenses and costs allowable by taxing authorities or the accounting procedures of the community. The same holds true for manufacturers; the community practices as to what is allowed as an expense should be included in the selling price allowed to be charged as a normal market price by that merchant.

The codes prohibit including interest expenses on money borrowed by the

business. This is a matter to be investigated in each case; and the businessman can consult his local rabbi (knowledgable in these areas of halacha - ed.) how to avoid the grave prohibition of paying interest to a Jew (or a Jew to receive interest from a Jew).

Most importantly, most communities have standards set by industries and professionals such as attorneys, accountants, taxing authorities and others who will set the community definitions of what is an allowable expense in determining the cost of an item to the seller. If the seller sold the item because he was under financial pressure to sell he cannot later protest the sale as being subject to the rules of discrepancy in price.

CHIZUK AND IDUD
*Divrei Torah from the weekly sedra
with a focus on living in Eretz Yisrael -
Chizuk for Olim & Idud for not-yet-Olim*

The age-old question still burns in our mind: If the Jewish People are Hashem's "favorite son", His first-born, then why are we constantly under duress? Why is there so much negativity cast in our direction and why are we perpetually set upon by the forces of evil?

The Zohar's commentary on Parshat Emor - which details the unique laws of a Kohen - offers one insight to this enigma. The Kohanim are granted more Mitzvot to perform than any other segment of our people. Imbued with this added dose of Kedusha, they

attain a special, elevated status. But at the same time, they become more highly susceptible to Tuma - spiritual "contamination" - and are required to be more vigilant in their behavior than other Jews, and more protective of their exposure to death or immorality.

Kedusha, holiness, attracts Tum'a like a magnet. Though the two would seem to be completely at odds with each other, they are actually opposites which attract. This is why Chazal say that the holier the person, the greater his Yetzer Hara and his potential for spiritual decline, thus requiring increased vigilance on his part. The Ohr HaChayim likens Mitzvot to honey, both of which are sweet, and bring out the best taste and flavor. But the more a jar is filled with honey, the more the bees are attracted to it. So, too, the more Mitzvot inside a person, the more Klipot, or negative forces, will confront him and swarm around him.

Because Am Yisrael is an intrinsically holy People, a veritable "Kingdom of Kohanim" filled with Mitzvot, we must deal with a perpetual onslaught of evil and negativity around us. But we should view this phenomenon as a Divine indicator of our acute sense of Kedusha.

So, too, the Land of Israel is imbued with more Mitzvot than any other land. Unlike the countries of the Exile, every centimeter and inch of Eretz Yisrael is holy ground, with an eternal Kedusha that is unique in the world.

And that is why the forces of evil spend an inordinate amount of time and energy confronting us. Our challenge is to recognize the spiritual power within us and our land, develop that power as best we can, and in so doing elicit Hashem's protection of Israel against any and all enemies.

Rabbi Stewart Weiss, Ra'anana

ArtScroll Series • Mesorah Publications Ltd.
WISDOM & WIT
by **Shmuel Himelstein**

The wife of R' Menachem Mendel of Kotzk once complained to the Rebbe's shamash that things seemed to be missing from the house. "Why shouldn't they be missing?" he said. "After all, nothing is locked away, the whole house is wide open, and it is so easy for anyone to steal anything."

Hearing this comment, R' Menachem Mendel became very upset. "What do you mean, 'it is so easy to steal'? How can anyone steal when it is specifically forbidden in the Torah?"

###

There is a well-known Talmudic dictum, "In the place where those who have truly repented stand, even the most righteous person cannot stand." R' Chanoch Henich of Alexander was asked about this apparent paradox. After all, why should the most righteous person be less worthy than a penitent? He answered: "This refers to a person who considers himself to be the most righteous..."

The Ba'al Shem Tov said: "There is no more conceited a person than a person who is convinced that he is truly humble."

TTTRIDDLES

Last issue's (Tripple) TTriddles:

[1] My name is Poki Safari

The solution to this TTriddle will be given after the solution for [2].

[2] A fine kosher mansion

In the Seder tradition of hiding the AFIKOMAN, that's what was done in this TTriddle. Let's rewrite it this way: A Fl(ne) KO(ser) MAN(sion). There it is - hiding in plain sight. Now for [1]. In case the AFIKOMAN was not hidden well in [2] - too easy to find, we hid it better in [1]. My name is Poki Safari = (my) NAM(e) (is) (p)OKI (sa)FA(ri). Now read it backwards and contact your Seder leader to ask him for a prize. Do not be too disappointed if he says NO. And do not contact us either.

[3] On for Ram"a; off for Ari z"l

Salt water. The salt water into which we dip the KARPAS is not on the ARI Z"L's Seder plate. The arrangement most people use is that of the ARI. KARPAS is on the plate; salt water is not. Kabbalist reasons, rather than "logic" determine the details of the Seder plate. The Ram"a's arrangement puts the saltwater on the Plate on the left side, opposite the KARPAS, just as the CHAROSET is to the left of the

MAROR. The main item on the right; the auxiliary item to its left. (So too, the Z'RO'A on the right and the EGG on the left, since the "main" KORBAN is the KORBAN PESACH and the secondary one is the CHAGIGA.) BTW, on the GR"A's Seder plate, neither KARPAS nor the saltwater is on, since that dipping is originally a MINHAG and not a mitzva, like PESACH, MATZA, and MAROR.

[4] Aboriginal name meaning "gentle firestick"

Moata was a 100 kW thermal Argonaut class reactor located at Lucas Heights near Sydney, Australia... 1961-1995... has since been permanently shutdown, and is in the final stages of dismantling. Moata is an Aboriginal name meaning "gentle firestick". For this TTriddle, Moata is ACHAREI MOAT (in the dictionary).

[5] No nuts - yes nuts

This TTriddle is based on the confluence of Parshat Acharei - with its focus on Yom Kippur - and Shabbat HaGadol - with its obvious focus on Pesach. There is a minhag not to eat nuts from Rosh HaShana to Yom Kippur. The popular reason given is that the gimatriya of EGOZ is 17, which is the same as CHEIT (sin, provided you misspell CHEIT by leaving off the ALEF at the end). Despite 17 being the gimatriya of TOV and CHEIT actually totalling 18, CHAI, which would seem to make the gimatriya explanation of the custom quite weak, the minhag persists. The numeric reminder of sin is shunned

during the Yamim Nora'im period, when T'SHUVA is sought in earnest. On the other side of the year, nuts are very much in vogue on Pesach. They are the main ingredient of CHAROSET and are traditionally given to children on Seder night to play with (hazel nuts). This "reminder" of sin does not seem to concern us at Pesach time. Some commentaries contrast repentance motivated by fear of G-d - T'SHUVA MEI-YIR'A (the type of T'shuva common during the Elul through Yom Kippur period) with T'SHUVA MEI-AHAVA (repentance motivated by love of G-d) that is associated with Pesach. There is a notion that the most that can be accomplished by T'SHUVA MEI-YIR'A is forgiveness for sins. But when T'shuva is motivated by love of G-d, then the greatest results possible are the turning of the sins into merits. Hence, no problem with the "reminders" of sin on Pesach.

[6] **Lehava concludes them both**

This Triddle too is based on the Yom Kippur - Pesach comparisons and contrasts. LEHAVA - LAMED HEI BET HEI is Rashei Teivot (initials) of L'SHANA HABA'A BIRUSHALAYIM HAB'NUYA, Next year in rebuilt Jerusalem. This prayer and wish concludes NE'ILA and YOM KIPPUR - it follows the final Shofar blast(s) of the day. It also concludes the Seder. (What comes after it in our Hagadot are poems that were added to the Pesach night experience at a later time. Originally, LEHAVA concluded the Seder.

EMOR Adapted from
Unlocking the Torah Text
by **Rabbi Shmuel Goldin**

Why Do We Count?

Context: In the midst of the Torah's discussion concerning the festival cycle, immediately after the commandment concerning the Omer offering (a barley offering in the Temple which marks the beginning of the harvest and allows the use of that season's grain), the following mandate is found:

"And you shall count for yourselves - from the day after the 'Sabbath', from the day you bring the waved offering of the Omer - seven weeks; complete shall they be. Until the day after the seventh Sabbath, shall you count fifty days; and you will offer a new meal offering to the Lord."

As codified by the rabbis, this mitzva, known as the mitzva of S'firat Ha'omer, the Counting of the Omer, obligates each Jew to verbally count the days and weeks from the second day of the holiday of Pesach until the first day of the holiday of Shavuot.

Question: What possible purpose can there be in verbally counting the days and weeks between Pesach and Shavuot?

The Torah offers no explanation for this mitzva.

Approaches:

A. Most obviously, the Counting of the Omer is perceived by many scholars as an act of linkage between the two holidays that border the mitzva, Pesach and Shavuot. Through the act of

counting we testify that the Revelation at Sinai (commemorated on Shavuot) was the goal and purpose of the Exodus from Egypt (commemorated on Pesach). This relationship is established at the outset when God informs Moshe at the burning bush: "And this is your sign that I have sent you: when you take the people out of Egypt, you shall serve God on this mountain."

On a deeper level, our counting consequently affirms that the physical freedom of the Exodus is incomplete without the spiritual freedom granted by God's law; a truth mirrored in the famous rabbinic dictum: "No one is truly free other than he who is involved in the study of Torah."

By counting the days between Pesach and Shavuot, many scholars continue, we also are meant to re-experience the sense of excitement and anticipation that marked this period for the Israelites, newly redeemed from Egypt. Just as we would "count the remaining days" towards an extraordinary event in our personal lives, so too we should feel a real sense of anticipation each year as we again approach the holiday that marks the Revelation at Sinai.

B. Other authorities choose to view these days primarily as a period of "purification from" rather than "anticipation towards".

By the time of the Exodus, the Israelites have been defiled from centuries of immersion in Egyptian society and culture. Numerous sources, in fact, maintain that they have descended to the forty-ninth of fifty possible stages of defilement and are on the verge of becoming irredeemable. With haste, at the last moment, God pulls the nation back from the brink. The newly freed

slaves, however, must now undergo a process of purification before they can encounter God and receive the Torah at Sinai. Forty-nine days - to counter each level of defilement experienced - must elapse before Revelation can take place.

By counting the days between Pesach and Shavuot each year, we remember and mark this refining journey. Just as a married woman monthly counts the days leading to her immersion in a mikva we must count and spiritually prepare ourselves for our reunion with God at Sinai.

Based on this approach, the Ohr HaChaim explains why S'firat Ha'omer begins each year on the second day of Pesach, rather than on the first. The Exodus, he observes, occurs on the first day of the festival. For a portion of that day, therefore, the Israelites yet remain in Egypt and the journey of purification cannot yet begin.

C. Rabbi Joseph Soloveitchik perceives yet another lesson embedded in the act of S'firat Ha'omer. The Rav suggests that, in Jewish experience, an individual can perform the act of counting within two realms: the realm of S'fira and the realm of minyan (the root of each of these terms means "to count").

When you count in the realm of minyan, the Rav explains, all that matters is the attainment of the ultimate goal, the endpoint of your counting. Nine upstanding, righteous men can assemble for a prayer service but, without a tenth, there is no minyan.

When you count in the realm of S'fira, however, things are different. Although you still count towards a goal, each individual unit in the calculation becomes a goal, as well. While someone counting precious diamonds, for

example, is certainly interested in the total number of diamonds he has, he also pauses and holds each gem up to the rays of the sun, admiring its unique facets, color and shape.

The act of S'firat Ha'omer teaches us to "count our days in the realm of S'fira" - to see each day as a goal unto itself.

Too often, we live exclusively goal-oriented lives; moving from accomplishment to accomplishment, from milestone to milestone, rarely stopping to appreciate the significance of each passing day. And yet, when all is said and done, the quality of the journey, in large measure, defines our lives - and the ordinary moments spent with family and friends are as significant, if not more significant, than the milestones themselves.

The Rav's observation may also be mirrored in two versions of the verbal formula for S'firat Ha'omer which have developed over the years. Some communities recite, "Today is the ---- day la'Omer (literally "to the Omer")" while others count "ba'Omer (literally "in the midst of the Omer")." Taken together, these two versions form the balance that should mark our approach to life. On the one hand, without goals our lives are aimless. We therefore count la'Omer, towards the endpoint of the Omer count. On the other hand, never losing sight of the journey's value, we also count ba'Omer, in the midst of the Omer. ❧

Parsha Points to Ponder

Suggested answers

If you haven't read and pondered the questions, go there first - page 20

1) The Kli Yakar explains that had the

Torah not taught this law specifically about Kohanim, one could have thought that it does not apply to the loss of one of the spiritual leaders of the nation and that it was perhaps permissible to express the deep loss of a Kohein through the pulling out of hair.

2) The Ohr HaChayim answers that this subtle change from CHILDREN to SEED indicates that Aharon and his sons are protected from developing these blemishes and they would only begin to develop among his SEED, beginning with his grand- children.

3) The S'forno teaches that one might have thought that since there are no longer sacrifices with the destruction of the Temple, the entire concept of counting the Omer should also cease. Thus, the Torah specifies that in all generations we should perform whatever we can and the counting continues even without the Omer offering.

Reflections on Yom HaAtzmaut

Guest article by

Rabbi Ephraim Sprecher

Dean of Students, Diaspora Yeshiva

A major difference between a slave people and a free people is that a free people has not only the ability but also the duty to defend itself. This is a theme that runs throughout the Torah and indeed the entire Bible.

In the story of the Exodus, the struggle to free the Israelites, is conducted entirely by G-D through miracles that are presented by His spokesmen, Moshe and Aharon. The people of

Israel do not rise up and do not fight for their freedom. This is true even at the Sea of Reeds, the climax of redemption, when they are specifically told: "G-d will fight for you; you keep still!" (Sh'mot 14:14). This is emphasized when the Egyptians say, "G-d is fighting for them against Egypt" (14:25) and verse 14:30, which sums up the story with the words "Thus G-d delivered Israel that day from the Egyptians."

Yet very soon thereafter, their first test as a free people is to defend themselves in the battle against Amalek, not to depend only upon a miracle from the G-d. For the first time, Moshe commands Yehoshua, "Pick some men for us and do battle with Amalek" (17:9). It is a battle in which they triumph, "And Joshua overwhelmed the people of Amalek with the sword" (17:13).

Unfortunately, this triumph does not continue throughout the wilderness story. Their fear overcomes them all too often, and they express a desire to return to Egypt rather than face the difficulties of defending themselves. This reaches its moment of disaster when, listening to the report of the spies, they refuse to continue the journey and undertake the battle for the land, preferring to die in the wilderness. "Why is G-d taking us to the land to fall by the sword?" (Bamidbar 14:3), they ask, and they determine to head back for Egypt. As a result, they must remain in the wilderness for 40 years so that the entire generation will die out and never reach the land of promise (14:26-35). The Rambam in

Moreh Nevuchim states that a slave generation is not capable of fulfilling the task of fighting and conquering the land of Israel.

This theme repeats itself again at the conclusion of their journey in the story of the tribes that ask Moshe's permission to remain behind on the other side of the Jordan, an area not considered fully part of the land of Israel. Moshe rebukes them with the caustic rhetorical question, "Shall your brothers go to war while you remain here?" (32:6). The sin of these tribes in the eyes of Moshe, is not only that they want to remain in Transjordan but that they, like their fathers, are not willing to fight for their freedom and will cause all Israel to turn and flee (32:14-15).

Only when they explain that indeed they are willing to fight -- "We will hasten as shock-troops in the forefront of the Israelites until we have established them in their home..." (32:17) -- does Moshe grant their request.

We find this same idea in the stories told of the period of the Judges. In the Song of Devora, for example, the tribes that did not join in battle are castigated for their timidity (Shoftim 5:15-17). Those who "came not to the aid of G-d, to the aid of G-d among the warriors" are even bitterly cursed (5:23).

D'varim stresses the need for all the males of appropriate age to fight in Israel's wars and lists those who are exempt: one who has built a new home and not dedicated it, one who has

planted a vineyard and not harvested it, one who has betrothed a woman but not married her, one who is afraid and might cause others to be frightened (D'varim 20:5-8). Those are the only exemptions.

The Mishna, determined that even these exemptions applied only to certain types of warfare - those that were not mandatory, but that in required wars such as Milchemet Mitzva or a war of self-defense, "all must serve, even the groom from his room and the bride from her canopy" (Sota 8:6).

Just as Israel had to change from a nation of slaves and become a free people and in so doing take upon themselves the responsibility for their own defense and the lives of the entire people, so too the emergence of a free Jewish state mandated such a change. While asking for G-d's help, we can no longer be passive in our own defense. That is what it means to be a free people.

As the Lubavitcher Rebbe stated -- one who serves in the IDF is engaged in Milchamet Mitzva 24/7 - all the time.

KOL HAKAVOD TZAHA "L and Happy Birthday Medinat Yisrael

יהי רצון מלפניך ה' אֱלֹהֵינוּ וְאֱלֹהֵי אֲבוֹתֵינוּ,
שְׂכֵשֵׁם שְׂזַכֵּינוּ לְאַתְחַלְתָּא דְגְאֻלָּהּ כִּן נִזְכָּה לְשִׁמְעַ
קוֹל שׁוֹפָר שֶׁל מְשִׁיחַ צְדִיקְנוּ בְּמַהֲרָה בְּיָמֵינוּ

May it be Your will, HaShem our God
and God of our fathers, that as we have
merited to witness the beginning of
redemption, so may we merit to hear the
sound of the shofar of our righteous
anointed one, swiftly in our days.

Komodo Dragon

At 10 feet long, it is the largest living lizard... largest land animal capable of parthenogenesis... in 2006 two komodos in the UK (zoos) gave birth despite having no access to a male, by a process called 'selfing'. Females have 2 different sex chromosomes: Z for male and W for female. Each of her ZW eggs has a second mini-egg attached to it,

containing a full copy of her genetic information. In the absence of sperm this gets reabsorbed and 'fertilizes' the main egg, producing a set of male (ZZ) non-identical twins. Komodos are excellent swimmers... found on a few small islands near Indonesia... Komodos are often called 'living dinosaurs'... they are fearsome carnivores with flat serrated teeth and powerful curved jaws. Their bite is fatal... their 'killer saliva' contains many virulent strains of harmful bacteria in addition to venom with powerful toxins. In addition to buffalo, deer and goats, they will often eat young komodos. To avoid being eaten, young komodos spend their early life in the treetops and when in the presence of

adults they will make themselves unappetizing by rolling in the droppings of other animals. Komodos eat once a month... they are highly intelligent... special organ in their mouth decodes distance and direction of prey...

from the i book of animals

How I Lost almost 50 Pounds with Loseit in Less than Six Months by Howie Kahn

I remember seeing headlines like that in my local newspaper when still living in the States. "Readers' Digest" would feature such articles a few times a year. But you must be thinking right now, "why am I reading about this in "Torah Tidbits?"

If you pick up the latest issue of the OU's "Jewish Action" you'll find an opinion piece authored by Rabbi Reuven Spolter entitled "Is Orthodoxy Unhealthy?" In it he writes how the plague of obesity is affecting America's Orthodox Jewish community. Rabbi Spolter's tragic conclusion is that "under the banner of frumkeit, we've adopted a lifestyle that's literally going to cut years and perhaps decades from our lives."

A couple of weeks before Purim I arrived in New York just in time to catch a morning minyan on the first day of Rosh Chodesh Adar Bet. At the end of davening, they announced that there would be a kiddush to celebrate this new and joyous month. I don't think that I ever saw so many boxes of donuts in my entire life.

Then just two weeks later at the same shul immediately after Megilla reading, the tables were overflowing with ice cream, hamantashen, potato chips, soda and more. Not one piece of fresh fruit could be found for those of us trying to watch our weight. Don't forget that Taanit Esther had been observed a few days earlier so we didn't go into Purim on empty stomachs. In fact we had just finished a Shabbos which included a kiddush, lunch and of course, Seuda Shlishit. Are there no limits to our

overeating? Wouldn't it be easier for a Yerushalmi like myself to just jump in front of the light rail?

Soon after last Succot I attended a meeting at the Israel Center given by a new group called "Loseit." They describe themselves as "The Center for Weight Loss and Stress Management." Well I have to say after having graduated their 12-week program that this is exactly what they're all about. I've already lost close to 50 pounds while my waistline has been reduced by more than 6 inches. Since my blood pressure readings continue to be good, my physician is actually thinking of taking me off medicine totally. My blood cholesterol levels have dropped and I am no longer suffering from sleep apnea. I'm also much more relaxed and accepting of what life has to offer without having to deal with it by eating a whole pint of ice cream. Just know that all of these things can happen to you too.

On Wednesday evening, May 11th at 8:00pm (see BackPage G), there will be another meeting describing the Loseit program. It will be hosted by both co-directors, Alan Freishtat, a certified personal fitness trainer and Linda Holtz who specializes in cognitive behavioral psychology. I'll be there as well to answer any questions you might have about the wonderful work that they do.

I'm well-known at the OU Israel center for my music programs. If you come to this special evening, you'll find me singing a different tune. However this one might just save your life.