



פרשת אחרי מות קדושים
אייר תשפ"א

SHABBOS SHIUR

All men and women are invited to join a shiur on fascinating aspects of the Halachos of Sefiras Haomer.

Between Mincha and Maariv in the Yeshiva Shule with Rabbi Michael Stern.

DOR LEDOR

Winter Dor Ledor is now in session.

Join us each week in on Motzai Shabbos, for learning, raffles, prizes, nush, stories and more.

7:30-8:15pm in the Mezzanine. For boys of all ages together with their learning companion.

SHAALOS UTESHUVOS

The Shaalos Uteshuvos shiur resumes this Sunday morning. This week we will look at

Renting the homes of non-Jews for an Eiruv in modern cities

A Teshuvah from the Minchas Elozor of Munkacz

9:30am in the Kollel with Rabbi Yonason Johnson

TUTALTZ PROGRAM

Anash Melbourne is joining the international learning in the Rebbe's Sichos on the Rambam's Halachos of Moshiach.

The program will offer multiple tracks, from in-depth learning, to learning for kids, in multiple languages and formats.

Melbourne will come together for a series of community learning evenings. Details to follow.

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A collection of Torah thoughts produced by Kollel Menachem

אין בית המדרש בלא
חידוש Chiddush



The Counting of the Omer by Way of the Kabbalah", Italy, 1782

In this Edition

The highest form of Avodah **P.1**

Tefillos after Sefiras Haomer - part 2 **P.2**

The highest form of Avodah

Two of the Mitzvos in Parshas Kedoshim are Orlah and Revai.

The Torah prohibits consuming the fruits which grow within the first three years of planting (Orlah). The fruit of the fourth year (Revai) is 'holy, a praise to Hashem' and must be eaten by its owners in Yerushalayim. Only in the fifth year, may the fruit be consumed in a regular manner wherever and whenever the owner desires.

Similar terminology is found in Parshas Breishis, when Adam is instructed that he may eat from any tree bar the Eitz Hadaas. The Midrash relates that the prohibition on eating of the Tree of Knowledge applied for only 3 hours - until the onset of Shabbos at sunset on the 6th day.

The Chassidic masters explain that refraining from eating the fruit of trees within their first three years corrects Adam's failure to wait these 3 hours.

The affect of Adam ingesting from the Eitz HaDaas was to cause good and evil to become mixed together within creation. Everything in the world became spiritually contaminated, requiring refinement by mankind to separate out its holy and G-dly dimension. This purification takes place through Torah and Mitzvos.

The first three years where no fruit may be consumed represents the Sur MeRa aspect of Avodas Hashem - abstaining from evil.

The Kabbalists refer to three types of impure forces (Kelipos) which cannot be elevated and must therefore be avoided.

The 3 absolutely impure Kelipos is the source of vitality for all things which are against G-d's will. These are the things which are forbidden by Torah (either biblical or rabbinic law). They cannot be elevated and are therefore forbidden.

The second phase of the refinement process is Aseh Tov. This refers to fulfilling positive Mitzvos.

This is akin to the fruit of the fourth year which whilst permissible to eat (unlike Orlah), must be eaten in Yerushalayim in a manner of Holiness. The positive Mitzvos draw down Hashem's light into the world.

The fruit of the fifth year may then be eaten freely in a way of blessing and abundance. This is the culmination of the rectification of the sin of Adam, where the ground that was cursed, becomes blessed and free from evil and the presence of Hashem is once again revealed.

The Alter Rebbe writes that the 3 years of Orlah parallel the 3 worlds of Creation described in Kabbalah; Beriya, Yetzira and Asiya. These worlds are a Yesh that exists seemingly independent of Hashem as entities on their own.

Because G-dly light that shines within these worlds is limited, this gives rise to the forces of Kelipah.

The fourth year which is holy, parallels the world of Atzilus, a world which is completely G-dly and Batel to Hashem.

Even though Atzilus is completely G-dly, it is still defined as within Seder Hishtalshelus, the order of G-dliness that relates to Creation.

The fifth year represents the dimension of G-dliness which transcends Seder Hishtalshelus - the essence of Hashem which is completely beyond all levels of existence.

The Rebbe makes a profound observation. The three stages a fruit goes through, represents an ascending hierarchy in Divine Service. Metaphorically they symbolise; The negative Mitzvos (Orlah), the positive Mitzvos (Revai) and then neutral involvement in the physical world (the fifth year).

Wouldn't it be more appropriate that the positive Mitzvos - represented by the holy fruits of the fourth year - be the pinnacle of our service! Why is it the mundane fruits of the fifth year which allow us to access the greatest spiritual heights?

The message is clear; holiness in Shule, prayer, study and keeping the Mitzvos is meritorious. But it is the transforming of our personal, mundane, day-to-day activities (business, eating etc) into conduits for the Divine will represents the ultimate level of Kedusha that we can attain.

It is through serving Hashem in our mundane that we actualise Hashem's ultimate and essential desire for Creation - a Dirah Betachtonim.

The weekly Halacha analysis

Tefillos after Sefiras Haomer - Part 2

Rabbi Yonason Johnson

Ribono Shel Olam

The Ribono Shel Olam is not recorded in the writings of the Ariza"l or in Mishnas Chassidim, however it is found in Siddur HaAriza"l and it is printed in many Siddurim, including the Siddur of the Alter Rebbe.

The Ribono Shel Olam is a Kabbalistic prayer. It describes how through Sefiras Haomer the souls of the Jewish people become purified. In the merit of the Sefiras Haomer of each night, we ask that any blemishes that we have created in the Divine Sefiros should be corrected, mentioning the corresponding Sefira of that night.

The 49 days of the Omer correspond to the seven emotional Sefiros; Chesed, Gevurah, Tiferes, Netzach, Hod, Yesod and Malchus. Each Sefira comprises subsets of the elements of all of the Sefiros, giving rise to 49 aspects.

It is brought in Seferim that one should say this Tefillah with great Kavanah and with a broken heart and should cry if they are able to.

The opponents

Whilst these Tefillos are printed in most Siddurim. However, not all of the Halachic authorities supported their recital.

According to the Vilna Gaon¹, no Pesukim or prayers, other than the Yehi Ratzon for the Beis Hamikdash, should be recited either before or after Sefiras Haomer.

The Chok Yaakov² writes a scathing piece in his commentary on Shulchan Aruch. He bemoans the new custom of printing the Nusach of Sefiras Haomer according to the esoteric teachings (Sod) and the Kavanos of the Sefiros, which has become widespread amongst the masses. Playing on the words of the Mishna, he writes that not just anyone who wants can assume the 'name' of being a Kabbalist.

He quotes a Teshuvah of the Maharsha"l who criticises those who follow the Kabbalistic practise of sitting when putting on Tefillin Shel Yad.

"They wish to be counted amongst the group of the Kabbalists... they have not looked into the Zohar and do not know the Kavanos. My teachers and ancestors - Geonei Olam, never practised this, they followed only the Talmud and Poskim. Were it required, surely it would have been brought in the Bavli, Yerushalmi, Pesikta or Sheiltos. Do not go in these ways... you have no business in the hidden matters as though one knows the secrets of Torah. Halevai they would know the revealed teachings!".

The Chok Yaakov concludes that this practise is

reserved for select individuals, who are known to be pious and masters of the hidden teachings. Even then, it should be done in private.

Aruch Hashulchan³ notes that great scholars (referring to the Chok Yaakov) spoke strongly against the reciting of these passages, but concludes that nowadays it is commonplace to recite them and the masses do so with great spiritual fervour.

In his Siddur, the Alter Rebbe writes instructions for the Kavanos for these Tefillos, "one should have Kavana on the Sefira of the particular night and also on the word of Ana Bekoach, the word of Mizmor Elokim and the letter from the Posuk Yismechu".

Accompanying the Sefiras Haomer entry for each night, the Siddur includes the words and letter that one should have Kavana on for that night.

The Rebbe⁴ notes that the Alter Rebbe generally did not include Kavanos in his Siddur. The fact that he brings a few select Kavanos is because the Alter Rebbe maintains that they are equally applicable to everyone שייכת לרבים... שזה לכל and should be followed.

Other Tefillos

In addition to these Tefillos, some have the custom of reciting the Posuk נשבע ביום הללתיך על שבע ביום ה' אדירך, "I praise You seven times each day for Your just rules"⁵, connecting the seven times to the seven weeks of Sefira.

Some also include the Posuk לך ה' הגדלה והגבורה והתפארת והנצח וההוד כיד כל בשמים ובארץ לך ה' - "To you Hashem are; greatness, might, splendour, triumph, and majesty— for all that is in heaven and on earth; to You, Hashem belongs kingship and pre-eminence above all". This is because this Posuk alludes to the seven Sefiros⁶.

Kaddish

There are different customs as to where in the davening Sefiras Haomer is counted. Some have the custom of counting Sefiras Haomer after Aleinu⁷. Others count Sefira before Aleinu, after the Kaddish Tiskabel⁸ as is the Chabad custom.

In many Kehillos where Sefira is counted after Aleinu, the Minhag is to recite an additional Kaddish after Sefira.

In a letter⁹, the Rebbe writes that if he could do so, he would instruct those Shules who count Sefira after Aleinu, to only say one Kaddish and to do so after Sefira and not in between Aleinu and Sefira. This is so as not to increase the num-

ber of Kaddeishim.

Nonetheless, if one is saying Kaddish in such a Shule, they may recite Kaddish after Aleinu and after Sefira as per the Minhag of the Shule.

For those who count Sefira after Kaddish Tiskabel, after counting we immediately recite Aleinu, with one Kaddish at the end.

Mitzvah Deoraisa

In the Ribono Shel Olam prayer, we say "You have commanded us through Moses Your servant to count Sefiras Haomer... As You have written in Your Torah, 'You shall count for yourselves from the day following the day of rest, from the day on which you bring the Omer as a wave-offering; seven full weeks. Until the day following the seventh week shall you count fifty days'" – quoting the Posuk which is the source of the Mitzvah to count Sefiras Haomer.

The commentators question that since nowadays, our Sefiras Haomer is only Rabbinic, why do we say that this Mitzvah was commanded to us in the Torah, quoting the Torah Posuk?

(The same question can be asked on the custom of those who recite Hineni Muchan before Sefiras Haomer in which they declare their readiness to fulfil the Biblical Mitzvah of Sefiras Haomer.)

The Minchas Elozor of Munkacz¹⁰ answers that it is because we are awaiting and anticipating Moshiach's arrival each day. Therefore, the Beis Hamikdash will be rebuilt before Shavuos and we will be able to bring the Shavuos offering of the 2 wheat loaves – Shte Halechem. As a result, retroactively, our Sefiras Haomer (even while in Golus) will become a Biblical Mitzvah.

The Rebbe¹¹ explains that according to this view, even without having brought the Korban Omer, the Biblical Mitzvah of Sefiras Haomer also depends on the offering of the Shte Halechem.

הרחמן הוא יחזיר לנו עבודת בית המקדש למקומה במהרה בימינו אמן סלע

1. Maaseh Rav Siman 70
2. 489:11
3. 489:6
4. Haggadah Likutei Taamim on Hallel Hagadol
5. Tehillim 119:164
6. Gedulah is Chesed and Ki Kol Bashamayim Uvaaretz is Yesod
7. Minhag Hagr" a. Minhag Yerushalaim as recorded in Kaf Hachaim
8. Chazon Ovadiah Yomtov p235, brining proof from Rav Hai Gaon.
9. 13 Nissan 5712
10. Nimukei Orach Chaim
11. Shaarei Halacha Uminhag OC volume 2, p 146. Referencing Radvaz, Maharil, Beis Yitzchok and others