



A collection of
Torah thoughts
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Kollel

חידוש

אין בית המדרש בלא
Chiddush

AVOS UBONIM

Winter Avos Ubonim kicks off this Motzai Shabbos and continues all the way through to Rosh Hashona.

Join us in the Mezzanine every Motzai Shabbos from 7:30-8:15pm.

Refreshments, raffles, fun learning and of course hot soup for those cold winter nights!

For more info or to become an Avos Ubonim sponsor, contact Rabbi Reuven Centner.

WINTER LEARNING

SAVE THE DATE! The annual Winter Yarchei Kallah Learning Program will take place on June 8-9, Sivan 10-11.

All men and women are invited to join us for 2 days of fascinating learning and discovery.

This year we will feature both day and night programs with top speakers and amazing topics.

Stay tuned for full details including who our internationally acclaimed guest scholar is going to be!

WOMEN'S HALOCHA

The young women's halocha shiur resumes this Monday with Rabbi Y. Johnson.

Changed topic: This term we will be looking at the practical halachos of Kashrus in the home and common kashrus shaalos. Ask your questions and get real answers!

Monday 10:00am at 29 Orrong Grove. Babysitting is available.

Missing a Day of Sefiras Haomer

Rabbi Yonason Johnson

We are all familiar with the halacha that if you miss counting a night of Sefira, you can no longer count with a brocha. But why is this so?

The Torah says that you should count *שבע שבתות תמימות*, seven complete weeks.

What does it mean that the weeks should be *תמימות*? The Talmud explains that the Sefira should commence at the very start of the day i.e. at night¹. Technically this refers to the first night, but presumably halacha does not make distinctions between the first night and the subsequent nights. Therefore every day of Sefirah is counted at night².

The Baal Halachos Gedolos (בה"ג) is of the opinion that *תמימות* also implies that the 49 days of Sefirah must be whole, without missing any days. If a day is missed, the entire Mitzvah is lacking and cannot be completed.

Most Rishonim³ disagree with the בה"ג and view each night as a separate independent Mitzvah. Missing one night does not invalidate the future count. According to this opinion, even if you miss a day of Sefirah, one is obligated to continue counting, and does so with a brocha.

The halacha⁴ follows most of the Rishonim that one who forgot to count one day must continue to count the remaining days of Sefirah. However following the principle *ספק ברכות להקל* we do not continue with a brocha, for perhaps the halacha accords with the בה"ג in which case the brocha would be in vain.

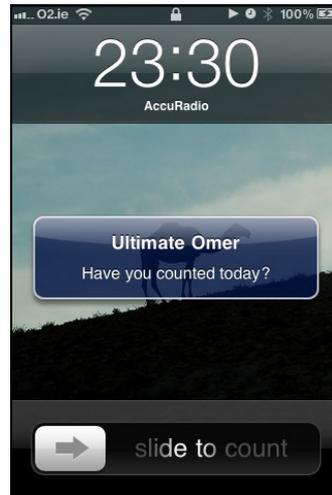
In this case one should endeavour to hear the brocha from someone else.

All of the above applies only if an entire day passed without counting.

If one forgot to count at night but remembers during the day time, they may count during the day (without a brocha). They may then continue their Sefirah count that night with a brocha.

The rationale is as follows: Whilst according to many Rishonim counting during the day is not valid, most Rishonim anyway hold that each night is a separate Mitzvah and may be counted with a brocha irrespective. As for the בה"ג who holds that if one

misses a day they may not continue with a brocha, he is anyway lenient and considers counting during the day a valid count which may even be done with a brocha⁵. The Sefirah would therefore still be considered *תמימות*.



Similarly if one is in doubt whether they missed a day or not, the halacha requires that they continue to count with a brocha for the remainder of Sefirah. This is due to a double *safeik*; perhaps they actually did count, and even if they did not, perhaps the halacha follows those Rishonim who view each night as a separate Mitzvah⁶.

If a person forgot to count both at night and the following day, but remembers during *bein hashemashos* (the period between sunset and nightfall which in halacha is considered a safeik whether it is day or night), they should count then without a brocha. Whether they may continue counting the remaining nights with a brocha is subject to debate⁷. Therefore one should continue counting without a brocha, preferably hearing the brocha from others.

If someone forgot to count Thursday night in those places where they accept Shabbos early (before sunset) and only remembers after having accepted Shabbos, they may still count the previous night's Sefirah (without a brocha) and may continue to count with a brocha. The fact that they had already accepted Shabbos and theoretically accepted the new day is not of consequence⁸.

Some Poskim are lenient and allow a Rov or regular Chazzan (where it is the minhag that the Rov always counts aloud) who missed a day to nonetheless count with a brocha. This is because the potential embarrassment. Since *כבוד הבריות* outweighs the doubt against continuing to count with a brocha, relying on the opinion that each day is an independent Mitzvah⁹.

The Rebbe has an interesting discussion on the *Shitah* of the בה"ג; If it is true that Sefiras Haomer is one continuous Mitzvah, then why do we make a separate brocha each night? Surely only one brocha should be said over the Mitzvah?

Furthermore, one would not be able to make the brocha until the final night, since one is unsure whether they will successfully complete counting every night. Should he end up missing a day, it would retroactively render all of the previous night's blessings in vain!

(Indeed there are Poskim who suggest that if one certainly knows at the outset that they will be unable to count every night of Sefirah, then they should not count at all with a brocha.)

See Likkutei Sichos for a lengthy discussion and reinterpretation of the *Shitah* of the בה"ג

Note: A common attitude is that if you miss a night of Sefirah you have "messed up anyway" and "why bother continue to count". This is far from the truth. Whilst one no longer counts with a brocha due to technical reasons, one is *Yotzai* Sefirah according to the majority of opinions. ■

¹ Menachos 66a

² See Shulchan Aruch Harav OC 489:3

³ Rosh Pesachim 10:41, Tosfos Menachos 66a and Tur in the name of Rabbeinu Yonah.

⁴ Shulchan Aruch Harav OC 489:24

⁵ See Shulchan Aruch Harav OC489:24 and 489:3

⁶ Shulchan Aruch Harav OC 489:25

⁷ Those who allow counting with a brocha base their opinion on the double safeik; perhaps we hold like the poskim who view each day as an independent Mitzvah. Even if we do not, perhaps Bein Hashemashos is still considered day time. However Birkei Yosef and others argue that even if we say that perhaps Bein hashemashos is still day, perhaps the halacha is like those Rishonim who do not consider counting during the day as valid.

⁸ See Nitei Gavriel Pesach volume 3, 36:8

⁹ See Nitei Gavriel Pesach volume 3, 36:13