



The Greater Washington Community Kollel SHABBOS DELIGHTS

TORAH MINUTE

IN MEMORY OF RABBI KALMAN WINTER ZT"l

Counting Down or Building Up?

Presented by Rabbi Zacharia Schwartz, Kollel Adjunct

Parshas Emor contains the *mitzvah* of *Sefiras Ha'omer*, to count the days from the second day of Pesach until Shavuot, the day of the giving of the Torah. The Sefer Hachinuch explains that we count the days until Shavuot to demonstrate our great love for the Torah and our anticipation of the day on which it will be given. This leads to the classic question: Typically, when we count towards something that we are looking forward to, we count *down* to show that we are getting closer and closer. Yet when we count the *Omer* we count up. Why?

Rav Shimshon Pincus explains that we typically count down because we see the time in between us and our goal simply as an obstacle to overcome. We count down because we are happy to be rid of the time that is in our way. The counting of the *Omer*, however, is not like that. The Torah is a precious prize that we long for, but it doesn't come for free. Connecting to the Torah requires that we work on ourselves and develop our character. We count up towards receiving the Torah because each day is part of a process of building ourselves. If we use the time correctly, we become people who are worthy of receiving the Torah.

This is the true *avodah* – the task during these weeks of *Sefiras Ha'omer*. Let us take the opportunity during this time to reflect on how we can grow and develop ourselves into better people. Through this process, when the day of Shavuot finally comes, may we be truly ready to receive the Torah anew.

Wishing you a Good Shabbos!

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Point to Ponder

TABLE TALK

Parsha Riddle

Say to the Kohanim the sons of Aharon... they shall not marry a woman who has been divorced from her husband (21:1 & 7).

The Gemara (Nedarim 32b) says that Hashem took the kehunah (priesthood) from Malkitzedek and gave it to Avraham.

If Avraham was given the status of a kohen, how was he allowed to marry Ketura (Hagar) after he had divorced her?

Until the morrow of the seventh week, you shall count fifty days (23, 16)

How many days of the Omer do we count? Why?

Please see next week's issue for the answer.

Last week's riddle:

How are the halachos of shechting a chaya, (a non-domesticated kosher animal) stricter than a beheimah (a domesticated kosher animal)? How are they more lenient?

Answer: The blood of a chaya must be covered. The fats of a chaya are allowed to be eaten.

HATORAH V'HAMITZVAH

HALACHA INSIGHTS FROM THE PARSHA

In parashas Emor (22:32), Hashem commands: "You shall not desecrate My holy Name, rather I should be sanctified among the Children of Israel; I am Hashem Who sanctifies you." This verse contains both a negative commandment against desecrating Hashem's Name (*chillul Hashem*) and a positive commandment to sanctify His Name (*kiddush Hashem*).

Rambam writes: The entire house of Israel are commanded regarding the sanctification of G-d's great name as it states: "I should be sanctified among the Children of Israel." Also, they are warned against desecrating His holy name, as it states: "You shall not desecrate My holy Name." (Yesodei ha-Torah 5:1, and cf. Sefer ha-Mitzvos aseh 9 and lo sa'aseh 63) Rambam proceeds to explain these commandments as directives to sacrifice one's life rather than transgress against the Torah in those circumstances where such sacrifice is mandated: When anyone about whom it is said: "Sacrifice your life and do not transgress," sacrifices his life and does not transgress, he sanctifies G-d's name. ...

When anyone about whom it is said: "Sacrifice your life and do not transgress," transgresses instead of sacrificing his life, he desecrates G-d's name. If he does so in the presence of ten Jews, he desecrates G-d's name in public, nullifies the fulfillment of the positive commandment of the sanctification of G-d's name, and violates the negative commandment against the desecration of G-d's name.

Rambam then enumerates other types of conduct that constitute *kiddush Hashem* and *chillul Hashem*, including the following: There are other deeds which are also included in the category of the desecration of G-d's name, if performed by a person of great Torah stature who is renowned for his piety — i.e., deeds which, although they are not transgressions, will cause people to speak disparagingly of him. This also constitutes the desecration of G-d's name. ...

The converse is also true. When a sage [conducts himself in such a manner] ... that all praise him, love him, and find his deeds attractive — such a person sanctifies G-d's name. The verse: "And He said to me: 'Israel, you are My servant, in whom I will be glorified'" refers to him.

There is another scenario that is considered by some to constitute a *chillul Hashem*: conduct that may be perfectly acceptable from the perspective of the Torah, but is considered immoral by non-Jews. This category is controversial, however, and a detailed discussion of it is unfortunately beyond the scope of this article.

PRESENTED BY

RABBI YITZHAK GROSSMAN, ROSH CHABURAH

KIDS KORNER

Who Am I?

#1 WHO AM I?

1. I can be extra.
2. I can be a lack.
3. I can be for animals.
4. I can be for people.

#2 WHO AM I?

1. I am not for ice cream.
2. A patrilineal tradition.
3. I get called first.
4. You give me your bread.

Last Week's Answers

#1 Dam/Blood (I am the soul, I was the first of ten, Salt me out, I am not "read.")

#2 Zaken (I could be a beard, I could be old, I could be learned, I make you upstanding.)

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