



MESSAGE FROM THE RAV

Dear Chevra

We hope you had a good week and wish you a wonderful and relaxing Shabbat ahead.

Our second parsha this week starts off with the commandment to be קדוש. In the Kedusha we say, "נקדש את שמך בעולם" – we will make Your name holy in the world." The Torat Kohanim teaches us that we are able to be "מקדש" G-d only if G-d allows us to do so. G-d tells us that He will only give us the privilege of declaring His holiness if we make ourselves holy first. How is this achieved?

As we have mentioned before, Judaism's concept of holiness is incorporated into our daily behaviour and thus, the parsha continues with a list of very practical mitzvot as a guide to attaining קדושה. Davka in the place where we would have expected to find a list of מצוות בין אדם למקום, Hashem gives us a list of commandments בין אדם לחבירו to teach us how to cleave to Him.

Standing out among the list of these commandments is ואהבת לרעך כמוך – love your friend as yourself. Rabbi Akiva stated regarding this mitzvah: "This is a great principle of the Torah" (Yerushalmi, Nedarim 9:4).

To whom does this mitzvah apply? At first reading, it appears that this command only applies to "your friend". The רמב"ם, in his definition of this mitzvah, directs us to treat our "brother in Torah and mitzvot" as we would want him to treat us (Laws of mourning 14:1). This seems to be exclusive. Indeed, the Torah teaches that one should hate those who hate G-d and do wicked deeds. (Pesachim 113b הלכות רמב"ם, 13:14 רי"צ). The רמב"ם explains that if one sees someone sin and rebukes him, he should hate him if he continues to sin after the rebuke.

And yet the רמב"ם himself writes in הלכות דעות 6:3 - "Every one is commanded to love every single member of Am Israel as he does himself, as is written, "Love your friend as yourself" - with no limitations. The Talmud also tells us that even if a Jew sins, he

remains a Jew (סנהדרין 44): "A myrtle among thorns retains its own name and identity."

To resolve this discrepancy we must clarify the תוכחה on רמב"ם, rebuke. Rabbi Tarfon swore that no one in his generation could give rebuke. Rabbi Akiva added that no one in his generation even knew how it should be done (Sifra, Vayikra 19:43). Thus, the Chafetz Chaim, Rav Kook and the Chazon Ish all ruled that the mitzvah to hate wrongdoers does not apply in our times (see Ahavat Chesed, "Marganita Taba"; Igrot Re'eya I, 266; and Chazon Ish on Yoreh De'ah 13:16 and on Hilchot De'ot 6:7). Because we cannot properly give תוכחה, it follows that we cannot hate wrongdoers who ignore our תוכחה. This brings a difficulty: how can the Torah command us to love everyone, including a wrongdoer? The answer is that even such a person has a pure, holy neshama and many good qualities and it is incumbent upon us to look for the good in every person.

We have just commemorated יום הזכרון and celebrated יום העצמאות. Though we have had to face many difficulties to do so, we have returned to ארץ ישראל after nearly 2000 years of exile. Towards the end of Parshat Acharei-Mot, Hashem tells us that the nations are thrown out of ארץ ישראל because they contaminated the land with their sins. Our task is to seek, find and focus on, not only the good qualities, but also the intrinsic קדושה that permeates every part of ארץ ישראל and act towards them with a focus on הקב"ה and His מצוות. Through this, we will surely be rewarded with seeing the final days of redemption and a return of all our fallen loved ones with the coming of משיח, the rebuilding of the בית המקדש and תחיית המתים. May they all happen speedily in our days!

שבת שלום
רב שמואל וטליה

QUOTE OF THE WEEK

"IT'S YOUR ATTITUDE, NOT YOUR APTITUDE,
THAT DETERMINES YOUR ALTITUDE!"



Part 2 הלכות ספירת העומר

The danger of inadvertently counting the Omer by a causal response or comment regarding what day of the Omer it is, is most prevalent on Lag ba-Omer. The very name "Lag ba-Omer" states that it is the 33rd day of the Omer count. Thus on the evening of Lag ba-Omer after sunset, one should be careful not to express that "today is Lag ba-Omer" until after he counts the Omer with the blessing.

If, inadvertently, one forgot and responded with the correct sefira count, he can count again that night with the blessing if:

- * He responded by saying just the correct number of that day, but did not say "Today is number so and so," then he may repeat the sefira with a blessing. But if he omitted just the word "ba-Omer" (or "la-Omer"), then the count remains valid and it may not be repeated with the blessing.
- * He responded by saying, "Today is so and so" but did not mention the "weeks" count, he may still repeat the sefira with a blessing. [Obviously, this applies only after the first week of sefira has passed.]
- * He responded with the correct number and the right weekly count but had specific and clear intention not to fulfill the mitzvah of Sefirat ha-Omer with his response.
- * The person who inadvertently forgot and responded, "Today is so and so" is one who is always particular to count the Omer after tzeit hakochovim only, and this exchange took place before tzeit hakochovim, he may repeat the count with the blessing.
- * In response to the question he wrote down the correct sefirah count (but did not say it), he may repeat the sefirah with the blessing.
- * The questioner, for example, asked, "Is today day number five?" and the response was, "Yes, it is," then both the questioner and respondent can repeat the sefirah and recite the blessing.

One may repeat the sefirah with a blessing if, in response to the question, "What was yesterday's Sefirat ha-Omer," one mistakenly answered today's count.

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*FOR COMMENTS ON THE PARSHA PAGE OR QUESTIONS FOR RAV BLOOM PLEASE E-MAIL: RABBI@LATEMINYAN.COM

*IF ANYONE WOULD LIKE TO SPONSOR THIS WEEKLY PARSHA PAGE IN MEMORY OF A CLOSE ONE OR IN HONOUR OF AN UP-COMING SIMCHA, PLEASE CONTACT TAMMY WILSON AT: CHAIR@LATEMINYAN.COM

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SHABBAT SHALOM

FROM THE LATE MINYAN

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