

1 – Topic – A Thought regarding Sefiras Ha'omer

As we prepare for Shabbos Parshas Emor and we feel Kabbalas Hatorah and Shavuos coming upon us. Naturally Parshas Emor has in it the Mitzvah of Sefiras Ha'omer as well as the Mitzvah of Shavuos and it is only natural that those are the parts of the Parsha that I will choose to discuss today.

Let's start with the Mitzvah of Sefiras Ha'omer. Rav Gedalya Schorr has a rule throughout his Ohr Gedalyahu that every Mitzvah has one main Nikuda, one main point about it which is true about all the Taryag Mitzvos but which is special to that Mitzvah. For example, Yom Tov has Simcha and Simcha is important in every Mitzvah, but it is special to Yom Tov. Chok, there is an aspect of a hidden reason to every Mitzvah but it is special to Parah Adumah. It is the main Nekuda.

What about Sefiras Ha'omer. What is the main Nekuda of Sefiras Ha'omer, the main point of Sefiras Ha'omer? In the Divrei Yoel the Satmar Rebbe writes in this week's Parsha on page Reish Chaf Beis, that the main point of Sefiras Ha'omer which is true about all the Taryag Mitzvos Hat'luyan Ba, but the special message about Sefiras Ha'omer is that a person has to consider it important for him to prepare for something before the time is upon us. The Nekuda of Sefiras Ha'omer is preparation for Kabbalas Hatorah. The idea is that the preparation in itself has a value. It is not just to prepare so that you should have it. You put gas in the car so that you can drive. Why do you put gas in the car? Because you have to prepare. But no one would say that putting gas in the car is itself something important.

It is not that way with Mitzvos. By Mitzvos when we prepare for a Mitzvah the preparation is itself something very important. 23:15 (וּסְפַרְתֶּם) it says and count, Zagat the Satmar Rebbe it is similar to 15:28 (וְסִפְרָהּ) V'safra by a Zavah. A woman who is a Zavah in order to become Tahor has to count 7 clean days. After 7 clean days she can go to the Mikva and become Tahor.

We all understand that the 7 days is not just a preparation. Without the 7 days of Tahara it is not possible. The whole Tahara is not possible. The same thing with (וּסְפַרְתֶּם), without the counting of days and without the preparation, it is really not possible to have an appropriate Kabbalas Hatorah.

The Gemara says in Rosh Hashana 16b (18 lines from the bottom) (חַיִּיב אָדָם לְטַהֵר אֶת עַצְמוֹ בְּרֵגֶל). That a person has to go to a Mikva on Erev Yom Tov in preparation for Yom Tov. The Turei Even asks that the Torah is talking about in the time of the Beis Hamikdash when you have to eat a Korban Chagigah and bring an Olas Re'i'ah. Of course you have to become Tahor. Why bring a special Drasha that you have to become Tahor?

Says the Satmar Rebbe the same thing. The Chiddush of that Gemara is that (חַיִּיב אָדָם) that a person has to be Metaheir himself before the Yom Tov in preparation for the Yom Tov. You can't wake up on Yom Tov morning that I have to go to the Beis Hamikdash so let me run to the Mikvah. No. it is all an idea of Hachana, of preparation.

The Chashivus of Sefiras Ha'omer is that there be a period of preparation. We shouldn't get too busy with everything else and have Sefiras Ha'omer just 60 seconds a night. Sefiras Ha'omer is a concept, it is an idea, it is a thought, it is a countdown or count up to Mattan Torah.

The Chinuch brings Sefiras Ha'omer in Mitzvah Shin Vav and he says something slightly different. He says that the Shorsh of this Mitzvah, the root of the Mitzvah of Sefiras Ha'omer is as explained as follows. L'har'os Godel Chavivus B'hishtokekus, to show a love and an anticipation towards Mattan

Torah. Ad She'merogesh She'hishtakekus Umonim Hayomim V'ha'Shevuos Kodem She'mishtokek L'davar Chashuv. It is like a person who is anticipating something of great importance, V'kotzro Rucho Litzpos Ad She'yizake L'oso Davar, and he is going crazy until he can get there. There is an excited anticipation for the Yom Tov. That is what Sefiras Ha'omer is about.

Someone who understands human nature will understand that the reason the Satmar Rebbe brings and the Shoresch Hamitzvah of the Chinuch, Hainu Hach, it is all one. The Satmar Rebbe writes that you need preparation for the Mitzvah, you have to prepare. The Chinuch writes about anticipation and excitement. We all understand that if you have excitement and anticipation towards something then you prepare for it.

A Bar Mitzvah boy for who his Bar Mitzvah is coming, he prepares for it. He is excited to get his Tefillin and his Tefillin bag and the clothing that he is going to wear as a Bar Mitzvah boy. His preparation and his Pshetel. The preparation shows an element of excitement. If a Bar Mitzvah boy is excited then he is going to be preparing. If a Bar Mitzvah boy is not preparing then there is something wrong. His Bar Mitzvah is coming and he is not preparing then there is something wrong and you have to figure out what is going on. Because excitement and anticipation and effort and preparation, those two things go together.

The same thing with Mattan Torah. If you are not preparing for Kabbalas Hatorah then you are not Mishtokeik, you don't have any excitement or anticipation for Kabbalas Hatorah. If you say you do, it is lip service. Because anybody who is excited and anticipating is preparing, doing something to prepare.

It is very sad. There was an ad in all the Jewish magazines and newspapers a couple of years ago. It had in big letters on top, Shavuos is not just cheesecake. They are right, Shavuos is not just cheesecake. Underneath it said no, it is blintzes and all kind of delightful cheese foods. Rachmana Litzlan. Shavuos is not just Cheesecake that is true, but it is Chas V'shalom that it is blintzes. Disgusting advertisement. Shavuos is about Kabbalas Hatorah.

Last year during the Pandemic, nobody had an ad that Shavuos is all about blintzes and cheesecake. No! Because then our values were in the right place. HKB"H brought us this year to a Shavuos that will be more open. The Beis Medrash will be full all night. Boruch Hashem. Should we be any less than last year? Are we more free this year to have more cheesecake and blintzes? Chas V'shalom. And so, we have an excitement towards Shavuos and anticipation and that needs a preparation. We have to prepare for Shavuos by night. Take out a Megillas Rus it is Thursday night and go to Mishmar. Tonight Lag B'omer is Mishmar night. Take out a Rus and start preparing for Kabbalas Hatorah.

2 – Topic – A Thought Regarding Shavuos

Let's move from Sefiras Ha'omer to the part of the Parsha that talks about Shavuos. The Posuk says in Posuk 21 (ויקראתם בַּעֲצֻם הַיּוֹם הַזֶּה, מִקְרָא-קִדְשׁ יְהוָה לָכֶם). Of course the Pesukim talk about every Yom Tov and about Shavuos it uses a unique Lashon. (בַּעֲצֻם הַיּוֹם הַזֶּה). In the day itself. (בַּעֲצֻם הַיּוֹם הַזֶּה). Every day is a day itself. What does it mean (בַּעֲצֻם הַיּוֹם הַזֶּה)?

The Netziv in his Hamiek Davar says that it comes to tell us that Shavuos you have to wait for the night. Don't add to the Yom Tov beforehand, you have to wait. You all know that Shavuos by night you wait for the night.

The Meshech Chochmo says a very similar thing. (בַּעֲצֻם הַיּוֹם הַזֶּה). She'ain Tosafos Yom Tov Mik'lal B'Shevuos. We don't add to Chag Hashavuos. Every Yom Tov there is a Mitzvah to add, every Shabbos there is a Mitzvah to add. Shemittah there is a Mitzvah to add, but not Shavuos.

It needs an explanation. Why should Shavuos of all the Yomim Tovim be (בְּעֶצְמָם הַיּוֹם הַזֶּה) and not have a Mitzvah to add to the day. It is something of a problem. The Velt says, people say, based on the language brought in the Magen Avraham I believe, that we need Temimos. (שָׁבַע שָׁבָתוֹת, תְּמִימָת). Temimos means that you can't start Shavuos early because then the 7 weeks are not complete. You can't start Shavuos early.

If we understand that the preparation for Yom Tov is a value onto itself. It is not just filling up the gas tank so that you can drive, because then you can just fill up the gas tank early and start driving it early. No. The preparation has its own value, its own anticipation, its own effect of making the Yom Tov and Kabbalas Hatorah important to you. If you understand that, then we understand (וּקְרָאתֶם בְּעֶצְמָם הַיּוֹם הַזֶּה). Shavuos is when Shavuos is and don't take away one minute of preparation.

If you think that the preparation is just like you have to prepare the Shabbos table, so you have to set the table. If you want to start the Seuda 5 minutes early so no problem we will set it a little more quickly. If you think that preparing is like preparing the Shabbos table, it is something that is just a means to an end and it is not an end into itself, then you have a Kasha why should Shavuos be different than every other Yom Tov. But if you understand that Shavuos is different than every other Yom Tov because on Shavuos we prepare for the Yom Tov and the preparation is its own value, it is an end onto itself, if you understand that then we are in business. Then we understand that we need Temimos because we don't want to take away a minute of your preparation and Shavuos is (בְּעֶצְמָם הַיּוֹם הַזֶּה). So a thought regarding Sefiras Ha'omer and a thought regarding the Posuk by Shavuos.

3 – Topic – A Question of the Week

I would like to end with a Kasha on the Rambam regarding this week's Parsha. As you know this week's Parsha has many Yomim Tovim. The Rambam in counting the Mitzvos counts each Chag the Mitzvah to not do Melacha, Shevisas Yom Tov, not doing Melacha on Yom Tov each Chag as a separate Mitzvah. In the Sefer Hamitzvos it is Mitzvah Kuf Nun Tes, Kuf Samech, Kuf Samech Aleph etc.

The Chinuch too, he doesn't say there is one Mitzvah, don't do Melacha on Yom Tov. The Chinuch says in Mitzvah Reish Samech Zayin, Reish Samech Ches, Mitzvah Shin etc. Separate Mitzvos for not doing Melacha on each Yom Tov. The Yera'i'im in Mitzvah Kuf Yud Aleph, Mitzvah Kuf Yud Beis etc. Rav Sadya Gaon I saw also separate Asei and separate Lo Sasei for each Yom Tov. Which means that the Mitzvah of resting on Sukkos is one Mitzvah, on Shavuos another Mitzvah. The Mitzvah of not doing Melacha on Pesach another Mitzvah.

Not only that, even not doing Melacha on the first day of Pesach is one Mitzvah and not doing Melacha on the last day of Pesach is another Mitzvah. So that in the Minyan of the 613 Mitzvos there are quite a number that are separate Mitzvos.

You will say fine, Geshmak, separate Mitzvos. What is the Kasha? The Rambam in the first section of the Sefer Hamitzvos has 14 Sherashim, 14 rules for how to count Mitzvos. In the 13th rule, in the Shoresh Yud Gimmel the Rambam says and I am quoting (שהמצות לא ירבה מספרם כמספר הימים שתתחייב בהן המצוה) (ההיא). We don't count them as separate numbered Mitzvos (כמספר הימים שתתחייב בהן המצוה ההיא). Because you have that Mitzvah more times. If it is the same Mitzvah.

Kriyas Shema morning and evening, the Rambam counts it as one Mitzvah. Mitzvas Asei Yud. It is all one Mitzvah. Why, you do it in the morning and in the evening? (לא ירבה מספרם). You don't add to them because of the amount of times they are done.

The same thing with a Korban Tamid. You bring a Korban Tamid every day in the morning and every day in the evening. One Mitzvah. Mitzvas Asei Lamed Tes.

The Kasha is why is Shevisas Yom Tov any different? It is true that the Mitzvah of taking a Lulav is one Mitzvah, eating Matzah is one Mitzvah as it is all separate. That I understand. But the Mitzvah of Shevisas Yom Tov, of not doing Melacha Tzorech Bi'ur. It should all be one big Mitzvah but that has a number of different days when it applies. Tzorech Iyun Gadol. It will give you something to think about over the Shabbos Seudah.

And with that, I want to wish everybody an absolutely meaningful Lag B'omer. What is special about Lag B'omer? It is the beginning of the third third of Sefira as Rav Schorr writes. The third third of Sefira is Torah. The first third is Avodah, the Yom Tov of Pesach. The second third is Gemilas Chasadim and has Pesach Sheini which is a Chesed and the last third beginning with Lag B'omer are the days of Zechusai Hatorah.

May we be Zoche B'ezras Hashem to prepare properly, to make it a Lag B'omer of Torah and learning. IY"YH tonight we are going to have a Hadlaka in the Agudas Yisrael of Madison. Not outdoors but indoors. We are going to have a Hadlaka of burning fire of Limud Hatorah. I hope that you will all be there. A Gutten Shabbos to one and all!