

BS"D



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INTERNET PARSHA SHEET ON EMOR - 5764

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From: Don't Forget [sefira@torah.org]

Subject: [Sefira/Omer] Day 32 / 4 weeks and 4 days

Tonight, the evening of Friday, May 7, will be day 32, which is 4 weeks and 4 days of the omer.

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From: TorahWeb.org Sent: May 06, 2004
www.torahweb.org/thisWeek.html

**RABBI YAAKOV NEUBURGER
RESPECT AND APPRECIATION FOR ONE
ANOTHER**

In some communities it is marked by festive trips to Meron and in some by cheerful "opsherin" parties celebrating the education of our little ones. In much of Israel bonfires fill its evening with their smoky smell culminating weeks of wood collecting, and yet for many, it may just be a much anticipated pause in the national mourning accorded the students of Rabbi Akiva. Bonfires, bows and baseballs may be its trademark, yet is it not intriguing that Lag Baomer, the yartzheit of Rabbi Shimon Bar Yochai, has caught our imagination altogether, and certainly in such varied ways? (Interestingly, he is probably the first one to have the anniversary of his death celebrated, rather than mourned - a practice expanded and maintained by Chasidim to this day.)

What is it about this tanna that sets him apart from the other tannaim, all of whose words and thoughts we plumb daily? True, he was chosen by Heaven to be the conduit of the mystical parts of our Torah, but does that mean that he outshines Rabbi Meir, on whom we depend for most of the mishna or Rabbi Yehuda Hanasi who saved the Oral Law for us and future generations?

His story in Mesechta Shabbos (33b) begins with RASHBI's biting cynicism accusing the Roman Empire of developing roads and bathhouses for self serving and decadent purposes. His comments were soon reported and he and his son soon found themselves holed up in a cave, living in fear of their lives, leaving no trace behind and having no sustenance from within. Miraculously Hashem provided a carob tree and a fountain of water, enough to sustain the two scholars, as they davened and learned daily for twelve uninterrupted years. It was then that Eliyahu calls upon them to join the world once again as the death of the Roman Emperor made the world safe for them.

Yet, it was not long at all before father and son found themselves once again secluded in the cave. This time however, Hashem, himself, banished them from society. What a painful censure after twelve years of eating and learning directly from Hashem's hand! Apparently it was

necessary because they had become a dangerous menace, questioning the validity of working in this world, "leaving a life of sanctity in order to pursue the mundane and the worldly". Coming from where they did, this was a powerful question and the Gemara records that Rashbi's gaze alone would singe the innocent farmer tending to his crops.

Thus, Hashem sentences father and son to seclusion, once again in the cave, with the words, "I did not free you in to destroy my world". Twelve months later Rashbi begs to return to the world and Hashem acquiesces. The story could easily end here. After all how things have changed! This time Rabbi Shimon bar Yocahi does not wait for Eliyahu to come. Now he and his son yearn to be part of Hashem's world. Perhaps they have made peace philosophically with a world that has room for Kabbalists and farmers, for the temporal and eternal somehow to live side by side.

However the story continues. It was Friday afternoon and a simple older gentleman rushing home as so many of us do weekly, bounds past Rashbi, who was probably engrossed already in the loftiest shabbos thoughts that unify all worlds. This gentleman is returning home clasp in his hands two myrtle branches, proudly explaining to Rashbi that each branch represents for him an essential part of shabbos. One branch reminded him of the positive commandments that we observe and one would represent the work from which we refrain. Upon hearing this insight of this seemingly ordinary person, Rashbi exclaims, "How dear are the mitzvos to Klal Yisrael."

In this little vignette Rabbi Shimon Bar Yochai is far from the biting cynic that drove him away from all people and he is certainly not the saint who has no patience for simplicity and innocence. Rather he is obviously the saint who has developed the "ayin tov", that appreciates the goodness of the well meaning gesture of every Jew and sees within them purity and substance. Indeed, it was probably this gentleman, whose name we will never know, that introduced into our homes, out of his interest to give to his home and his G-d, the two candles which has become the primary minhag with which we welcome every shabbos

This attitude, that respects the inherent goodness and contribution of all those who earnestly strive to do Hashem's bidding and was extended from the greatest kabalist to the farmer is clearly the antidote to the lack of respect that the students of Rabbi Akiva had for each other which brought about their death.

Certainly it deserves to bring about a pause in our mourning to give us pause, so that the life of Rashbi will impact upon us and enhance the respect and appreciation we have for one another.

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From: RABBI YISSOCHER FRAND [ryfrand@torah.org] Sent: May 06, 2004 To: ravfrand@torah.org Subject: Rabbi Frand on Parshas Emor

Why Is The High Priest Not Allowed to Marry a Widow?

We learn in the parsha that a Kohen [Priest] is not allowed to marry a divorcee, and the Kohen Gadol [High Priest] is not even allowed to marry a widow. The Daas Zekeinim m'Baalei haTosfos provides an astounding interpretation of the law that the Kohen Gadol cannot marry a widow, that highlights how suspicious the Torah is when it comes to human nature and man's baser instincts.

On Yom Kippur, the Kohen Gadol mentions the (normally) unmentionable Holy Name of G-d while standing in the Kodsh HaKodoshim [Holy of Holies]. If, during one of the ten times that the Kohen Gadol mentions the explicit Name of G-d on Yom Kippur, he has in mind a certain individual that he does not like, then that person will die during the coming year.

The Daas Zekeinim is suggesting that at this spiritually charged time, when the Kohen Gadol mentions the Holy Name of G-d on behalf of the entire Jewish nation, he might have in mind that he wants to marry a certain (already) married woman. Implicitly, he would be hoping that her

(current) husband will die so that he might marry her.

To preclude such a possibility, the Torah insists that he marry a virgin rather than a widow, so that such wicked thoughts will never enter his mind.

This is an amazing statement. The message is that, unfortunately, people can be so corrupt that in the holiest moment of the year, in the holiest place in the world, when the Kohen Gadol is involved with the responsibility of carrying the prayers of all of Israel, at that very moment he could, possibly, deviously abuse the Holy Name of G-d.

The Daas Zekeinim emphasize this point further by mentioning a passage from the Talmud Yerushalmi [Jerusalem Talmud]. The Talmud Yerushalmi states that originally the Kohen Gadol would pronounce the Explicit Name of G-d out loud 10 times during the Yom Kippur Service. This powerful Name was normally not spoken, and most people did not even know how to pronounce it correctly.

This practice was stopped, because there were people who would listen to the Kohen Gadol's pronunciation of the Explicit Name of G-d on Yom Kippur and would write down the transliteration of that Name, so that they would have it available during the course of the year if they wanted to curse someone. The practice of audible pronunciation of the Explicit Name was stopped so that people would not be able to use this weapon. Incredible, but true.

Congratulations on Doing the Mitzvah, But...

The pasuk [verse] states, "They shall guard my safekeeping and they shall not bear sin over it and die because of it, for they will have defiled it, I am Hashem who sanctifies them." [Vayikra 22:9]. The context of this verse is the consumption of the Terumah by Kohanim. Rashi says that the sin referred to is the capital offense of consuming Terumah while in a state of impurity (Tumas haGuf).

Rav Yeruchum makes the following observation in his work on Chumash: Eating Terumah is a mitzvah. The Torah is warning that in the course of doing a mitzvah, one should make sure not to commit any aveirahs [sins].

We are lulled into thinking that while we are in the midst of performing a mitzvah, we are 'exempt' and have immunity from any sins that we might be doing simultaneously. "I'm doing a mitzvah now, so I have nothing else to worry about." This is not true.

Sometimes a person can be doing a mitzvah, but in the course of doing a mitzvah he commits an aveirah. The admonition of this pasuk is not only referring to Terumah. Anytime one performs a mitzvah he needs to make sure that the mitzvah is complete and is not tainted by any simultaneous aveirahs.

The classic example of this is the person who comes in to daven Ma'ariv [pray evening prayers] and parks his car in the middle of the parking lot (blocking other parked cars from driving away). He thinks "Well this other fellow is probably davening Ma'ariv as well. I'll leave right after Ma'ariv and won't be causing anyone any problem."

Of course, the other fellow did not come to daven Ma'ariv. He is now ready to go back home. He comes outside and finds another car sitting horizontally opposite his fender. Of course, the person who came in "just to daven ma'ariv" is caught in a conversation with a third person after ma'ariv. The poor fellow in the parking lot is stuck there because he can't get his car out.

Beautiful. Someone wants to daven ma'ariv. He wants to do it with a minyan [quorum of ten]. Wonderful. But "They shall guard my safekeeping and they shall not bear sin over it..." Congratulations on doing the mitzvah. But be careful not to simultaneous sin in other matters.

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These divrei Torah were adapted from the hashkafa portion of Rabbi Yissocher Frand's Commuter Chavrusah Tapes on the weekly portion: Tape # 415 - The Ba'alas Teshuva and the Kohain.

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From: Kerem B'Yavneh Online [feedback@kby.org]

Sent: May 06, 2004 KBY Eparsha

PARSHAT EMOR "COUNT FOR YOURSELVES"

ROSH HAYESHIVA RAV MORDECHAI GREENBERG SHLITA

It says regarding the mitzvah of sefirat ha'omer (Vayikra 23:15-16):

You shall count for yourselves – from the morrow of the rest day, from the day when you bring the omer of the waving ... and you shall offer a new meal-offering to Hashem. From your dwelling places you shall bring bread that shall be waved, two loaves...

There are a number of unique elements here that are not found in other offerings: "the omer of the waving," "a new meal offering," "two loaves," and the command, "you shall count for yourselves." What is the message of the omer?

On the pasuk in the beginning of Shemot, "They did not heed Moshe, because of shortness of breath and hard work" (Shemot 6:9), Chazal say: "They did not heed Moshe" – to abandon their idolatrous practices. This is what Yechezkel said: "No man of them cast away the detestable [idols] of their eyes, and they did not forsake the idols of Egypt." (20:8) This interpretation is difficult, since the Torah says that they did not heed Moshe because of shortness of breath, whereas Chazal teach that it was because they were immersed in idolatry!

The sefer Gelilei Zahav explains that social nature and a national bond is something natural to every human society, in contrast to animals, where each individual cares only for itself and is willing to kill another to fulfill its personal needs. In human society, though, each person has a strong feeling to associate with his nation, and many times is even willing to give up his life for the nation's rights.

When Am Yisrael were in their land, this feeling was strong, and they would give their lives for the good of the nation and its land, more so than other nations, because this feeling among Jews, at its source, is spiritual and Divine. Chazal say that regarding Esav it says, "the souls (nafshot – pl.) of his household," whereas about Israel it says, "seventy soul (nefesh – sing.)." Israel, who serve one G-d, is one soul; the other nations, since they worship many gods, are many souls. However, from the time we were exiled from our land, the nationalistic feeling has been weakened, and everyone concerns himself only with himself and his family. Therefore, Chazal say on the pasuk, "Curse Meroz ... for they failed to come to aid [the nation of] Hashem" (Shoftim 5:23), that one who helps Israel is like one who helps Hashem. In contrast, one who is affected with the trait of self-centeredness, even if he is involved in the service of Hashem, but his intention is only for himself – it is like he is worshipping idols.

Chazal say: "Whoever lives outside of Israel is like one who does not have a G-d." Outside of Israel a person does not have nationalistic feelings, and the concern only for oneself is like idolatry.

This is what was lacking in the exile in Egypt. Each person was steeped in his own self-interests. They did not know what nationalistic feelings were, and therefore, they did not want to leave. It therefore says, "With a strong hand [Pharaoh] will send them out," because they did not want to

leave by themselves. This was Moshe's concern, that they would prefer the conveniences of exile to life in Israel.

This is Chazal's intention that they did not heed Moshe to abandon their idolatry; they were steeped in the trait of self-centeredness, and did not want to throw away the idol of self-centeredness. This is what Yechezkel complained about, that, to this day, "No man of them cast away the detestable [idols] of their eyes, and they did not forsake the idols of Egypt." They repeated the sin that they did in Egypt, and did not succeed in understanding the importance of the community. Chazal say: "The son of David (i.e., Mashiah) will not come until the prutah (lit., penny) is gone from the pocket" – until the praitiut (individualism) is gone from the pocket of the heart.

The idea of sefirat ha'omer is to correct his fault. Therefore it says, "Count for yourselves," i.e., for that negative trait which is "for yourselves," your self-centeredness. You should take the barley, animal food, which cares only about itself, and wave it and rise from this low trait. Then bring a new meal-offering, which comes from wheat, human food, which has social feeling, and is concerned not only for himself. Therefore, two breads are brought, one for him and one for his friend, after correcting the seven traits, when each trait blends with the others, forty-nine in all. In this way, man rises from low depths to great heights, from the trait of an individual animal to the trait of a social person, and brings a new meal-offering, since he is made a new person.

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From: RABBI JONATHAN SCHWARTZ [jschwartz@ymail.yu.edu]
Sent: May 06, 2004 To: internetchaburah@yahoo.com
Subject: [internetchaburah] Internet Chaburah -- Parshat Emor 5764
Prologue: It is one of the more interesting commandments in that the command requires no action.

Within the account of the Yamim Tovim, we are instructed by Hashem to count the Omer. The torahs command is simple; USifartem Lachem MeMacharat HaShabbat You should count for yourselves from the day after Pesach. Yet, the juxtaposition of this commandment requires explanation. Why is it placed in the middle of the listing of the Jewish holidays? Also, why is the accounting introduced as Lachem for yourselves. What does one benefit from the count that it deserves the title Lachem?

Rav Shalom Yosef Zevin (Moadim BHalacha) offers an interesting homiletical insight that seems to answer our questions. Rav Zevin notes that technically one should count down to Shavuot (See Sefer HaChinuch) not up from Pesach as we do, if one were merely awaiting the holiday of Shavuot. However, the lesson of Sefira is that one can properly prepare himself daily, making each day a lift up on the day before it, especially during the Sefira period. In that sense, explains Rav Zevin, Sefira is a count up a one up that happens each day becomes a build on the spiritual and ethical path toward perfection. For that matter, the Sefira becomes each persons personal accounting. No two people chart a plan in the same way in that no two people are spiritually bettered in the exact same way. For that reason, the Torah notes that the Sefira count is Lachem, for you. For through the Sefira, one takes personal accounting for himself and betters himself accordingly.

Based on Rav Zevin, we might be able to understand why this mitzvah appears specifically in the account of the Moadim. The Sfas Emes notes that Moadim are times for spiritual inspiration. The challenge after Yom Tov is to bring the Regel into our daily lives. In that sense, the placing of Sefira in the middle of the Moadim carries the same message home to us. Do not only be Jews of the Yom Tov. Spiritual elevation requires one to turn each day into a personal Yom Tov wherein spiritual betterment makes us stronger and better people and servants of Hashem.

Lagging in Lag BaOmer?

The Biur Halacha (O.C. 493) notes that the students of Rabbi Akiva passed away for 33 days over the period of the Omer except on days when Tachanun was omitted. After excluding days like Rosh Chodesh, and the rest of Pesach, the Shabbatot and the like, he concludes that we are left with 33 days. However, he notes, there is a custom to hold of Miktzat HaYom KKulo for one of the days and for some unknown reason, the day of Lag BaOmer was selected. The comment begs us to ask, why do we celebrate Lag BaOmer?

The day of Lag BaOmer is known as a joyous one for the Jewish nation. Josephus (War against the Jews II: 37:17) notes that the reason for the celebration is based upon the fact that on the 18th of Iyar (the day of Lag BaOmer) the final rebellion began in 63 C.E. The Jews, according to Josephus, celebrated the day in order to commemorate their devotion not to submit to the Roman authority. In the past, the day was known as Tzom Yehoshua as this was the day that Yehoshua led 3000 men in battle against the city of Ai. The author of the Piyut for Iyar notes this clearly when he says Tzom Yehoshua BShmoneh Esrai Bo. The Chasam Sofer notes yet a third reason for the lag BaOmer commemoration: He explains that the final pieces of Matzo that the Jews took out of Egypt lasted until the 15th of Iyar. Three days then passed until the Manna fell. Thus, the first day of Manna was the 18th of Iyar (or Lag BaOmer) and therefore the day is set aside as a cause for celebration.

And yet, despite these historical precedents, no mention of ?Lag BaOmer appears in the Talmud or in the writings of the Gaonim. Only in the works of the Meiri (Yevamos 62b) do we find mention of the significance of this great day. The Meiri notes that the Gaonim accepted (Kabbala BYadam) that the day that the students of Rabbi Akiva stopped dying was Lag BaOmer. The Aruch HaShulchan (O.C. 493:2) concurs, adding that Lag BaOmer was the day that the students stopped dying.

However, the Raavan (Sefer HaManhig Hil. Eirusin UNissuin 106) notes that he heard in the name of Rabbi Zerachia of Gerona that the significance of this period is that it is 15 days prior to Shavuot. The Tashbatz (I:178) quotes the same comment of Rabbeinu Zerachia noting that it is the 34th day of the Omer and NOT Lag BaOmer that is 15 days before Shavuot. This opinion seems to be shared by the Michaber (O.C. 493:2) who notes that one may shave not on LAG BaOmer but only one day later. According to this opinion, it seems as if there is no basis for celebration of Lag BaOmer at all.

The Rema argues with the Michaber. He notes that there is significance to the day of Lag BaOmer itself and therefore it is a day when Tachanun should not be recited. The reason, seems to be based on the day, not on its proximity to Shavuot.

A different cause for celebration is brought out from Kabbalistic sources. Although somewhat disputed, Lag BaOmer is generally accepted as the day of the Yartzeit of Rabbi Shimon Bar Yochai, the author of the Adara Rabba and the Adara Zuta. Some remind us that there is a hint to this in that the story of Rabbi Shimon Bar Yochai appears on the 33rd page of Meseches Shabbos. It is based on this tradition that the Jewish people have a custom to travel to Meron (Rabbi Shimon Bar Yochais burial spot) on Lag BaOmer and to light bonfires there in his honor as light symbolizes the enlightenment that his Torah brought to the world.

Yet, the Chasam Sofer had great difficulty with the Meron celebration. He notes (Shut Chasam Sofer Y.D. 233) that if their (the pilgrims to Meron) are people with pure intentions then their merit is great. However, I would not have joined them as it is improper to fashion a Yom Tov on a day that has no commemoration of a miracle. The Shut Shoel UMeishiv (Chamishia, 39) goes one step further arguing that there should be fasting, not frivolous joy when a Tzaddik passes. So why the celebration of the death of Rabbi Shimon? He adds that he highly

doubts if this was the intention of the early Kabbalists who probably traveled to Meron to pray, not to light fires.

Still, other Acharonim suggest that the celebration of Meron is built upon the understanding that Rabbi Shimon was the one whose students became jealous of a fellow Talmid who had left the land of Israel and became wealthy. After hearing of his students discontent, he took them outside (in Meron which overlooks the valley) and uttered a prayer at which time the valley became filled with gold coins. He told the students that anyone who wanted to take could, at the expense of his merits in Olam Haba. And thus, in the merit of the Torah, Lag BaOmer is celebrated today, as a celebration of the primacy of Torah.

Seizing upon this idea, Rav Berel Wein (Iyunim BMesechtos Hatalmud) posits that the celebration of Lag BaOmer might be a collection of these reasons. However, he adds that the fact that Lag BaOmer falls out on the 18th of Iyar is true only to those who ignore the Sadducees and count the Omer on the second night of Pesach. In order to commemorate the Torah SheBaal Pehs distinction of Mochorat HaShabbat as a reference to post-Pesach night, which allows us to have Lag BaOmer and Chai Iyar coincide, we celebrate Lag BaOmer as a celebration of the truth of the word of Chazal: Moshe Emet VTorato Emet.

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From: ohr@ohr.edu Sent: Wednesday, May 05, 2004 To: weekly@ohr.edu Subject: Torah Weekly - Parshat Emor TORAH WEEKLY - For the week ending 8 May 2004 / 17 Iyyar 5764 - from Ohr Somayach | www.ohr.edu <http://ohr.edu/yhiy/article.php/1665>

OVERVIEW The kohanim are commanded to avoid contact with corpses in order to maintain a high standard of ritual purity. They may attend the funeral of only their seven closest relatives: father, mother, wife, son, daughter, brother, and unmarried sister. The kohen gadol (High Priest) may not attend the funeral even of his closest relatives. Certain marital restrictions are placed on the kohanim. The nation is required to honor the kohanim. The physical irregularities that invalidate a kohen from serving in the Temple are listed. Terumah, a produce tithe given to the kohanim, may be eaten only by kohanim and their household. An animal may be sacrificed in the Temple after it is eight days old and is free from any physical defects. The nation is commanded to sanctify the Name of G-d by insuring that their behavior is always exemplary, and by being prepared to surrender their lives rather than murder, engage in licentious relations or worship idols. The special characteristics of the holidays are described, and the nation is reminded not to do certain types of creative work during these holidays. New grain may not be eaten until the omer of barley is offered in the Temple. The Parsha explains the laws of preparing the oil for the menorah and baking the lechem hapanim in the Temple. A man blasphemes G-d and is executed as prescribed in the Torah.

INSIGHTS All-Niter "Until the morrow of the seventh week you shall count..." (23:18)

Staying up all night doesn't sound very religious, but there are several times during the Jewish Year when the custom is to burn the midnight oil until the sun peeps through the blinds.

Many people stay up after the Seder on Pesach until the time of the morning prayer to recount and analyze the great miracles of the Exodus. As the Haggada itself says: Rabbi Eliezer, Rabbi Yehoshua, Rabbi Elazar ben Azaria and Rabbi Akiva stayed up all night talking about the Exodus until their talmidim (students) came to tell them that it was time

to recite the morning Shema Yisrael.

On Yom Kippur, those with sufficient strength stay up all night in prayer and supplication atoning for their sins. On Hoshana Rabba, the time when the decrees of Yom Kippur are given over to those agents who will carry them out, there is a tradition to learn all night.

On the night of Shavuot too, there is a widely observed custom to stay up all night. The Sages of the Kabbala formulated an order of study call a tikkun (lit. "fixing") for the night of Shavuot. This includes passages from the written Torah, the oral Torah, the mystical Zohar, as well as a list of all 613 mitzvot.

The Zohar commends those who stay awake in anticipation of receiving the Torah. The giving of the Torah was, as it were, the wedding of the Jewish People and the Torah, and so it is fitting that we should be engaged in preparing the ornaments of the bride the previous night.

Another reason: On that first Shavuot morning, there were some who overslept and had to be awoken to receive the Torah. In order to rectify this, we stay up.

But there is a deeper reason that we don't sleep on the night of Shavuot.

Sleep is the taste of death.

If fact, the Talmud tells us that sleep is 1/60th part of death. One part in 60 is the threshold of perception. Similarly, Shabbat is a "taste" of the World-to-Come. It's precisely 1/60th of the World-to-Come.

Sleep is the taste of death in this world. King David died on Shavuot. But before he died, he never even tasted the taste of death, because he never fell into a deep sleep. Thus on the occasion of his yartzeit - the anniversary of his death - we avoid the "taste of death" by staying up all night.

The angel of death came to King David to try and take his life. But it had no power over him for he was immersed in learning Torah and Torah is the essence of the life-force in this world. The only way that the angel of death could take David's life from him was through cunning: He managed to distract David from his learning, and in that split second, he was able to take his life from him. So on this night of Shavuot, which is both the anniversary of the giving of the Torah and the end of King David's life, we stay awake all night and immerse ourselves in Torah study.

Torah breathes life into Man. But it was not always this way. When G-d first created Man, he was animated by G-d's utterance: "Let Us make Man". It was the power of these words spoken by the Creator that gave Man the ability to live and breath and think and act.

However, this was only until the Jewish People stood at the foot of Sinai. When Hashem said "I am Hashem, your G-d" - the first commandment - the life-force that animated Man parted from the body and the entire Jewish People died. Miraculously their souls were put back into their bodies, but what animated them now was a different utterance. No longer their life-force derived from "Let Us make Man." Now they were like new creations. Their inner essence was powered by "I am Hashem, your G-d." From this moment, the Torah became the animating dynamic of the Jewish Soul.

And when the Mashiah, the scion of King David, arrives to herald the era of the revival of the dead, it will be the Torah, the dew of life, which will be the mechanism to awaken the body from its long sleep.

Then we will finally understand the words we have sung for so long:

"David, Melech Yisrael, chai v'kayam!"

"David, king of Israel, lives and endures!"

- Sources: Tehillim 73:5, Yalkut Shimoni; Talmud Berachot3b; Tehillim 19:9; Book of Our Heritage, Rabbi Eliahu Kitov, translated by Rabbi Nachman Bulman; Time Pieces, Rabbi Aaron Lopianski

Written and compiled by RABBI YAAKOV ASHER SINCLAIR

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From: HOWARD JACKSON <howard.jackson@citigroup.com>

"And G-d spoke to Moshe, telling him to speak to the Israelites and say to them: There are special times that you must declare as sacred holidays to G-d. The following are My special times" (VaYikra 23:1-2). The Torah advances through all the Jewish festivals until the conclusion in verse 37: "The above are G-d's special times which you must declare as sacred holidays; bringing a fire offering to G-d ... each depending on the particular day".

Curiously, the Torah then revisits the festival of Succot in verse 39: "But on the 15th day of the 7th month, when you harvest the land's grain, you shall celebrate a festival to G-d for 7 days ... and on the first day you must take for yourself a fruit of the Etrog tree, an unopened palm branch, myrtle branches and willows (that grow near) a brook" (VaYikra 23:39-40)! If the Torah wanted to inform us about the Lulav and Etrog, why did it not include them earlier, before verse 37?

Gemara Rosh HaShanah 29b teaches that whenever Rosh HaShanah coincided with Shabbat they would only blow the Shofar in the Temple, but not in the rest of the country. If, however, Rosh HaShanah fell on a weekday, they would blow the Shofar in the whole country. Rabbi Levi bar Lachma said in the name of Rabbi Chama bar Chanina that this discrepancy is explained by the nuance in the following verses. "Shabbaton Zichron Teruah" = "a sacred holiday of commemorating the Shofar blowing" (VaYikra 23:24) refers to the situation when Rosh HaShanah fell on Shabbat. "Yom Teruah Yihyeh Lachem" = "it shall be a day of Shofar blowing for you" (BeMidbar 29:1) refers to when Rosh HaShanah fell on a weekday. Rava clarified that the Torah actually permitted blowing the Shofar when Rosh HaShanah fell on a Shabbat, but the Rabbis forbade it, due to concerns that people might mistakenly carry a Shofar to an expert, transgressing the prohibition of carrying in a public domain. The same rationale ! applies to Lulav and Etrog.

Kohelet Yitzchak elucidates that the Asmachta (support text) for this Rabbinic decree concerning the Shofar is as Rabbi Levi bar Lachma stated above. The Asmachta for the Rabbinic decree concerning the Lulav and Etrog is our aforementioned post-scripted verse in VaYikra 23:39-40, excluded from the main section about Succot!

Shofar so good, but close analysis of the text in VaYikra 23 and BeMidbar 29 reveals other fascinating anomalies: The main section regarding the festivals appears in VaYikra 23, so why is the main phrase relating to Rosh HaShanah "Yom Teruah Yihyeh Lachem" only mentioned in BeMidbar 29 (where the festivals are only cited because Musaf (additional) offerings are detailed), whilst the rarer scenario of "Shabbaton Zichron Teruah" is quoted here? Why does VaYikra 23:34 state concerning Succot "on the 15th day of this 7th month", whereas verse 39 states "on the 15th day of the 7th month"? VaYikra 23:35 states "On the first day (of Succot) shall be a sacred holiday when you may not do any Melachah (39 categories of creative or destructive work, which demonstrate man's mastery over nature, listed in Gemara Shabbat 73a)". Compare this with our verse in VaYikra 23:39 "...the first day shall be a day of rest ..." which does not mention the word "Kol" = "any".

Gemara Shabbat 87b teaches that the Israelites left Egypt on Thursday, 15th Nisan (like this year). Therefore, their first Rosh HaShanah in the desert occurred on a Shabbat, the same day of the week as the 3rd day of Pesach and utilising the A-T BA-SH* code. That is why the Torah describes Rosh HaShanah here in VaYikra 23:24 as just "Shabbaton Zichron Teruah"! In contrast, the verse later in BeMidbar 29:1 sets forth the general case for subsequent years when Rosh HaShanah usually falls on a weekday, namely "Yom Teruah Yihyeh Lachem".

Kohelet Yitzchak explains further: Since Succot commences exactly two weeks after Rosh HaShanah, the first day of the Israelites' first Succot in the desert also occurred on a Shabbat. That's why VaYikra 23:34 refers to "this 7th month", meaning specifically this year. In this year, where the first day of Succot fell on Shabbat, even the few categories of Melachah which are normally permitted on a weekday Yom Tov

(festival) would this year be forbidden, hence "...you may not do any Melachah". The Mitzvah of Lulav and Etrog is omitted from here because they would not take them since it was Shabbat! Later on, in a separate passage (VaYikra 23:39-40), the Torah would explain the Mitzvah of Lulav and Etrog that would pertain to subsequent years when Succot usually falls on a weekday. There, the Torah would specify the more lenient rule of "the first day shall be a day of rest" rather than "the first day shall be a sacred holiday when you may not do any Melachah".

* Alef (the 1st letter of the AlefBet) refers to the 1st day of Pesach and corresponds to Tav (the last letter of the AlefBet). Tav alludes to Tisha B'Av. So, Tisha B'Av always occurs on the same day of the week as the 1st day of Pesach. Bet (the 2nd letter of the AlefBet) refers to the 2nd day of Pesach and corresponds to SHin (the 2nd to last letter of the AlefBet). SHin alludes to SHavuot. So SHavuot always occurs on the same day of the week as the 2nd day of Pesach. Gimel (the 3rd letter of the AlefBet) refers to the 3rd day of Pesach and corresponds to Reish (the 3rd to last letter of the AlefBet). Reish alludes to Rosh HaShanah. Etc.

From: Jeffrey Gross [jgross@torah.org] Sent: May 05, 2004 To: weekly-halacha@torah.org Subject: Weekly Halacha - Parshas Emor
WEEKLY-HALACHA FOR 5764

By RABBI DONIEL NEUSTADT Rav of Young Israel in Cleveland Heights A discussion of Halachic topics. For final rulings, consult your Rav

COUNTING SEFIRAS HA-OMER UNINTENTIONALLY

As Lag ba-Omer approaches, it is timely to call attention to a halachic problem which can easily arise. People frequently ask each other what day of the Omer it is. If one gives the correct answer - even though he does not intend to fulfill the mitzvah of counting the Omer by answering his friend - it is considered as if he fulfilled his obligation to count the Omer. This halachah, which is recorded in the Shulchan Aruch,(1) is based on an opinion in the Talmud that holds that mitzvos eimam tzrichos kavanah, mitzvos can be fulfilled even without specific intent to fulfill them. By uttering the correct day's count of the Omer, he has lost the opportunity to recite a blessing over the counting since he has, in the eyes of the halachah, already counted the Omer, albeit unintentionally.(2) One should, therefore, not give a direct answer when asked for the day of the Omer; rather one should say: Yesterday's count was such and such. Of course, this advisory applies only from sunset and onwards, since counting sefirah before sunset is invalid.(3)

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 (as Lag is the letter equivalent for the number 33).(4) 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.

QUESTION: If, inadvertently, one forgot and responded with the correct sefirah count, is there any way that he can count again that night with the blessing?

DISCUSSION: B'diavad, one is permitted to recite sefirah 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 sefirah with a blessing.(5) 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.(6) If he responded by saying, "Today is so and so" but did not mention the "weeks" count, he may still repeat the sefirah with a blessing. For instance, on the seventeenth day he responded, "Today is day number seventeen," but he did not add, "which is two weeks and three days."(7) [Obviously, this applies only after the first week of sefirah has passed.] Even if he responded with the correct

number and the right weekly count but had specific and clear intention not to fulfill the mitzvah of Sefiras ha-Omer with his response, then he may repeat the sefirah with a blessing.(8)

If the person who inadvertently forgot and responded, "Today is so and so" is one who is always particular to count the Omer after tzeis ha-kochavim only, and this exchange took place before tzeis ha-kochavim, he may repeat the count with the blessing.(9) If on the fifth day, for example, he responded, "Today is six minus one," or, "Today is three plus three," he may repeat the count with the blessing.(10) If 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.(11) If 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.(12)

QUESTION: May one repeat the sefirah with a blessing if, in response to the question, "What was yesterday's Sefiras ha-Omer," one mistakenly answered today's count?

DISCUSSION: Yes, he may. Since his intention was to say yesterday's count, it is considered as if he had specific intent not to fulfill today's mitzvah. Although he mistakenly said the wrong (today's) count, it still does not change the fact that he specifically intended not to fulfill the mitzvah.(13)

SHAVES AND HAIRCUTS ON LAG BA-OMER:

QUESTION Is it permitted to shave or take a haircut on the evening of Lag ba-Omer or does one need to wait until the morning?

DISCUSSION: The Rama(14) says that haircutting may not take place on Lag ba-Omer until "Lag ba-Omer itself, not the evening [before]." The poskim debate what the Rama meant: Some(15) say that he meant to exclude the evening before the day of Lag ba-Omer. In their view, haircutting may begin only on the morning of Lag ba-Omer. This interpretation is based on the fact that Lag ba-Omer itself is still included in the days of mourning over the death of the disciples of Rabbi Akiva. The halachic principle of miktzas hayom kekulo - a small part of the day is considered like a whole day -permits us to lift the mourning restrictions after a small part of the day has passed in mourning. Other poskim,(16) however, reject this interpretation of the Rama's ruling.

In their opinion, the Rama meant to exclude only those who permit haircutting before the night of Lag ba-Omer has actually begun (tzeis ha-kochavim). Once it is definitely night, however, Lag ba-Omer has begun and haircutting is permissible.

Both of these views are quoted in the Mishnah Berurah, who does not render a clear decision on this issue. In many communities it has become customary, based on the previously mentioned view, not to take a haircut or a shave until the morning of Lag ba-Omer. But in an area where a clear custom does not exist, or in case of necessity, one may be lenient and take a haircut or a shave immediately upon nightfall of Lag ba-Omer.(17) [Concerning weddings, however, there are poskim who hold that they should not be held on the evening of Lag ba-Omer,(18) while others are lenient in regard to weddings as well.(19)]

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FOOTNOTES: 1 O.C. 489:4. 2 Although basic halachah follows the opposing view - that one must have specific intent when fulfilling mitzvos - still, in deference to the view according to which one would have fulfilled the mitzvah, we do not recite the blessing on the (second) sefirah; Mishnah Berurah 489:22 and Beur Halachah (s.v. sh'eim and eino). 3 Beur Halachah 489:4 (s.v. eino). A minority view recommends that one should avoid a direct response as early as plag ha-minchah; see Shulchan Aruch ha-Rav 489:15 and Machatzis ha-Shekel 489:10. 4 See Sha'arei Teshuvah 489:1 and Beur Halachah (s.v. moneh) who quote various views as to whether or not one fulfills the mitzvah of sefirah by counting with roshei teivos. 5 Mishnah Berurah 489:20 and Sha'ar ha-Tziyun 25. L'chatchilah, however, one should not rely on this leniency and should avoid stating the correct number even without saying "today," Kaf ha-Chayim 489:53. 6 Mishnah Berurah 489:8;489:21. 7 Mishnah Berurah 489:22. Since other poskim disagree and

maintain that one has fulfilled his obligation even without mentioning the "weeks" count [except at the end of each week - day 7, 14 ,21, etc.], one should l'chatchilah not rely on this leniency; see Da'as Torah 489:4 Sha'ar ha-Tziyun 489:28 and Kaf ha-Chayim 489:55. 8 Mishnah Berurah 489:22. 9 Beur Halachah 489:4 (s.v. sheim) 10 Be'er Moshe 3:82. 11 Chasam Sofer 6:19; Aruch ha-Shulchan 489:9. 12 Da'as Torah 489:4, quoting Zachor l'Avraham. 13 Be'er Moshe 3:80. 14 O.C. 493:2. 15 Levush, Gra, Machatzis ha-Shekel, and others. 16 Chok Yaakov, Mor u'Ketzia, Eliyahu Rabbah, and others. 17 See Kaf ha-Chayim 493:30. 18 See Mishnah Berurah 493:11 quoting the Eliyahu Rabbah. See also Teshuvos Chasam Sofer O.C. 142. 19 Igros Moshe O.C. 1:159; Chelkas Yaakov 1:97.

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PENINIM ON THE TORAH

BY RABBI A. LEIB SCHEINBAUM

PARSHAS EMOR Say to the Kohanim, the sons of Aharon, and tell them. (21:1) Rashi explains that the redundancy of the words, Emor, v'omarta, "Say to the Kohanim and tell them," is teaching us an important lesson. Emor v'omarta - l'hazhir gedolim al laketanim, "to caution the adults about the children." Basically, the Torah is expressing the significance of teaching the next generation. This concept applies not only to parents, but also to all of those charged with disseminating Torah. L'hazhir, to caution, may be derived from the word zohar, to shine/illuminate. It is imperative that the student notices the teacher's joy and enthusiasm about everything holy: Torah; mitzvah observance; acts of loving-kindness. Only when exhibiting these traits is he truly able to convey the beauty of being an observant Jew. It is not enough to merely teach; one must light up the students' eyes. This occurs when the student sees the rebbe's elation, his thrill and excitement at being able to impart his Torah knowledge to another Jew. When the teacher is enthusiastic about his work, the student senses its significance.

Horav Yitzchak Zilberstein, Shlita, relates the following story that occurred with Horav Binyamin Finkel, Shlita. In one of the developments outside of Yerushalayim, a lecture for baalei teshuvah, recent returnees to Jewish observance, was planned. Fifty people were to attend this shiur. As it would happen, the lecturer had a last-minute conflict that prevented him from attending. The organizers of the lecture called upon Rav Binyamin to give the shiur instead. Realizing the importance of maintaining credibility and continuity, he accepted the invitation. It took him considerable time using public transportation to reach the home of the sponsor. At first, he thought he had a wrong address; nobody seemed to be home. As he was about to leave, the door opened. A young man greeted him apologetically. Apparently, he had forgotten to organize the lecture and, therefore, no one had come.

Rav Binyamin had taken considerable time to travel to the shiur. He was not going to waste it. "Let us learn together," he said to the young man, whose name was Moshe. The man was excited about the opportunity for a "one on one" chavrusa, study partner, with the Mashgiach. He even brought along his young son. The seder ha'limud, order of study, was to study Mishnayos for thirty minutes, followed by thirty minutes of Talmud. Prior to the shiur, Moshe asked Rav Binyamin, "When we finish studying the Mishnayos, can you let me know?" "Surely," Rav Binyamin replied, not knowing why it was crucial for Moshe to know when they started studying the Talmud portion of the Shiur.

Thirty minutes had elapsed, and Rav Binyamin notified Moshe that they were about to begin the Gemara. Moshe arose from his chair. With great enthusiasm, he recited the Bircas Shehechyanu. Moshe explained, "I have never studied Gemara before. This is my first time, and I wanted to thank Hashem for granting me the opportunity to study the Talmud."

Twenty years later, Rav Binyamin was walking down one of the streets in Yerushalayim when he was approached by a middle-aged man. To all outward appearances, he seemed to be a rav or rosh yeshivah. "Rav Finkel, do you recognize me?" the man asked. "Forgive me, but I do not," replied Rav Binyamin.

"I am Moshe, with whom you learned Gemara twenty years ago." "What brings you to Yerushalayim?" Rav Binyamin asked, visibly taken aback by the contrast between his present appearance and that of twenty years earlier.

"I have just taken a position as rosh kollel in one of the kollelim here in Yerushalayim. The Shiur that you gave me that night was the beginning of my total

return to the Torah way of life."

Emor v'omarta: When the teacher demonstrates indifference to the subject and to the student, the lesson has a commensurate endurance. In contrast, when he displays excitement, joy and enthusiasm, he produces students of the caliber of Moshe, who followed in his path and continued his work.

Students are machshiv, appreciate and value, the Torah in the manner that the rebbe values it. In the following story cited by Rabbi Yechiel Spero, we see how a gadol, Torah luminary, valued the Torah. Horav Michel Forshlager, zl, was a brilliant talmid chacham, Torah scholar, whose volumes of commentary on Torah and halachah indicate his encyclopedic knowledge and utter brilliance. His hasmadah, diligence, in Torah study overshadowed even his erudition, so attached was he to Torah every waking minute of the day. Horav Yaakov Y. Ruderman, zl, Rosh Hayeshivah of Ner Israel in Baltimore would send the premier students of his nascent yeshivah on Friday afternoons to "speak in learning", discourse various topics in the Talmud, with him.

Rav Michel did not care about his material surroundings. His life's essence was nothing but Torah. Understandably, the American students who visited with him were somewhat taken aback with the sparseness of his living conditions. To put it simply: Rav Michel lived in abject poverty. His home had one focus: Torah study - and nothing else. When his guests would arrive, Rav Michel would greet them with a big smile. His table was piled high with open sefarim, as he researched and plumbed the depths of Torah and its commentaries.

Before he began to speak in learning, he would excuse himself, leave the room and return a few minutes later. His behavior seemed strange to the young yeshivah students: He went out to exchange his old worn-out sweater for one that was slightly less tattered. Rav Michel felt the need to explain his actions: "There is a reason for changing sweaters before I speak in learning with you. I own two sweaters - one is for weekdays and one is reserved for Shabbos. Before you walked in I was wearing the weekday one, but before I speak divrei Torah with two such distinguished yeshivah students, I feel compelled to put on my Shabbos sweater as a token of kavod haTorah, honor for the Torah, which you embody."

This is Torah study at its zenith. When one is machshiv Torah, he also values and reveres those who study and disseminate Torah. Regrettably, he who does not respect those who study the Torah is not demonstrating respect for the Torah either. This is to be noted especially by parents. Parents convey a critical message to their children by their every action. The esteem in which they hold their children's rebbeim foreshadows the respect the children will show to these same rebbeim. It always begins at home: Emor v'omarta, "the adults are cautioned regarding the children."

Say to the Kohanim, the sons of Aharon. (21:1)

The Midrash tells us that Hashem showed Moshe Rabbeinu an outline of the future, the various Torah leaders of every generation. He showed him Shaul Hamelech, the first king of the Jewish people, and the manner in which he died tragically by the sword. When Moshe saw this, he asked, "Is it proper that the first king to reign over Your children should perish by the sword?" Hashem replied, "You say this to me. Emor el haKohanim, say this to the Kohanim, whom he killed in the city of Nov. They serve as an indictment against him." Apparently, Moshe agreed with the Kohanim's incrimination of Shaul. His only question was in regard to Shaul being the first king. What is the significance of being first?

Horav Nossan Wachtfogel, zl, notes that throughout the Torah we find primacy and precedence given to the rishon, first. Terumah and Maaser have kedushah, sanctity, because they are first. Adam HaRishon's sin was overwhelming because he was the first man, thus attributing greater significance to his sin. Reuven would have been the Kohen and king over Klal Yisrael had he not erred. Even the gentile nations acknowledge the relevance and distinction to be accorded to the first, to the one who inaugurates a position. During the Polish Revolution, Marshal Wosilski, Poland's first marshal came to the president and demanded that he abdicate his position. The president was guarded by two powerful soldiers who moved forward to kill the seditious marshal. As they moved toward him, the marshal opened his tunic and declared, "Are you prepared to kill the first Polish marshal?" Upon hearing this, they immediately moved back, a move that heralded the beginning of the end for the Polish president.

Likewise, Moshe was claiming that Shaul was the first king and should, therefore, not have died such a humiliating death by the sword. Hashem replied by citing the pasuk, Emor el haKohanim, "Say to the Kohanim:" While it is true that being the first of anything engenders great distinction, how will you respond to the accusation brought by the Kohanim of Nov? They are also rishon, first. The Kehunah, priesthood, is honored first in every endeavor. Indeed, all of Shevet Levi receives distinction because they were the first ones to stand up for the honor of Heaven

during the sin of the Golden Calf. After Levi was criticized by Yaakov Avinu, he repented and became the first Rosh HaYeshivah of the Shivtei Kah, Tribes. Yes, the fact that Shaul was the first king is of great significance. He reduced that significance, however, by killing the Kohanim who also had the advantage of being first. As with every honor, it is beneficial only if the individual values it. The favored position can only assist one who acknowledges the advantage that it generates. Apparently, Shaul did not respect the position of the Kohanim. Thus, his inaugural position of monarchy was similarly not honored.

Say to the Kohanim, the sons of Aharon, and tell them. (21:1) Rashi explains that the apparent redundancy of the words Emor, v'omarta, Say to the Kohanim and tell them, is a reference to the important role the adult Kohanim play in teaching the laws to their children. I was recently reading how the Brisker Rav, zl, raised his children and the critical significance he gave to supervising their educational development personally. While some of contemporary society's enlightened parents might feel his approach was a bit to the right of center, he succeeded in laying the foundation for generations of offspring dedicated to emes, spiritual integrity, and the Torah way. The Brisker Rav said later on in his life, that when he was young, he was personally aware of where his children were and what they were doing twenty-four hours a day, seven-days a week. Furthermore, his children were acutely aware of his supervision and impact upon every aspect of their lives. This probably would not be comfortable for some of today's children or their parents. They are not, however, gedolei Yisrael. The Brisker Rav was a firm believer that a child have a sense of freedom, but nonetheless the parent should monitor everything. Granting total freedom to a child is to court disaster. A parent should combine discipline with love, taking a deep interest in his life, regardless of his age. Yet, the parent should be strict with regard to granting him total independence.

The Brisker Rav did not waste money on frivolities or materialistic notions. On the other hand, when the demands were spiritual, he always found the money. Even if an old Chumash or Siddur was not worn or torn, if a child wanted a new one, the Brisker Rav purchased it. The greatest respect was accorded to his children's rebbeim. Consequently, the children learned to emulate these values in their own homes.

While there is much to be written about the Brisker Rav's approach to chinuch habanim, the following vignette summarizes it, teaching us what we should do in order to achieve success in raising our children. The Brisker Rav was once taking a stroll in Yerushalayim, when a man came up to him and said, "I am very envious of the Brisker Rav. All of his children go in the richtigen vehg, proper way, b'derech haTorah, in the path of the Torah, even though they were raised during turbulent times. Many other families, even some of the most distinguished rabbinic families in Lithuania, did not fare so well. Many of the young people were swept up in the revolutionary movements and the like."

The Brisker Rav did not respond. He simply listened and nodded his head in acknowledgment. Approximately one half hour later, he turned to his son, Rav Rephael, who was with him at the time, and said, "Ah, they do not know how many tears I shed as I shokeled, rocked, each baby in the carriages; how I prayed; and how many kapitlach, chapters, of Tehillim, I recited for them that they should follow in the path of Torah."

Rav Rephael followed in his father's footsteps. A master mechanech, educator, he raised his only child, a daughter, in the Brisker way of integrity and simplicity. He understood the crucial value of the home, especially when it came to a girl's educational development. He would say, "Whereas a son's domain is in the yeshivah, the daughter absorbs her Yiddishkeit primarily in the home. Parental example and life experience are her primary texts - even in contemporary times."

His daughter recalled an incident that demonstrated her father's approach to infusing his perspective of pashtus, simplicity, in her education at home: "I remember when I was young and about to enter the first grade. I was an only daughter, which would normally grant my parents license to spoil me. The situation was far from that. I was given a simple, homemade briefcase with the straps stitched on by hand. My maternal grandmother came over and declared, "I am buying her a nice new leather book bag with a matching lunch bag - a special set." My father said, "Wait a moment. She will not go to school the first day with both pieces of the set. If she does, it will cause jealousy. First, she will bring the book bag, then, a few weeks later, she can bring the matching lunch bag."

This orientation is quite different from that to which our children are accustomed today. Interestingly, many years later, Rav Rephael's daughter recalled the incident with pride as having a seminal influence on her life.

In honor of Rabbi and Mrs. Neustadt on the occasion of the Bar mitzvah of their son, Akiva n"y Mr. and Mrs. Eli Adler

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