

# CLASS 67 - EMOR

by Rabbi Heshy Grossman

## LAG B'OMER

*"U'Sfartem Lachem MiMochoras HaShabbos MiYom Haviachem Es Omer HaTenufah Sheva Shabbosos Tmimos T'hiyena" (Vayikra 23:15)*

"When are they 'Tmimos'? When Klal Yisroel does the will of Hashem" (Vayikra Rabba 28:3)

We are commanded that our counting of the Omer be 'Tamim'. What is the precise meaning of 'Tamim', and how is it achieved?

'Tamim' is complete. Pure and unblemished.

In this shiur we will explain how Sefiras HaOmer relates to this idea.

1

"He [Rebbe Yochanan ben Zakkai] said to them: Go out and see, which is the good path that man should cleave to?"

"Rebbe Eliezer said: a good eye."

"Rebbe Yehoshua said: a good friend."

"Rebbe Yossi said: a good neighbor."

"Rebbe Shimon said: one who sees what will develop."

"Rebbe Elazar said: a good heart."

"Said Rebbe Yochanan ben Zakkai: I see the words of Rebbe Elazar rather than yours, for your words included in his". (Avos 2:13)

The Maharal explains that Rebbe Yochanan ben Zakkai is looking for the path of good that is most inclusive. Each of his students suggest an approach that incorporates varied elements, but the statement of R.Elazar - 'a good heart' - is all-inclusive.

The heart lies at the center of life, both physically and spiritually. Just as the heart pumps blood to every extremity, so too, all human spirit and emotion is contained within it. A good heart encompasses every other characteristic as well.

"Lev Tov" equals forty-nine B'Gimatria. Meaning this: just as a human being must strive to develop a perfect heart, similarly, the forty nine days of the Omer must be completely counted if one hopes to receive the revelations of Shavuot and Lag B'Omer.

'Lev' is thirty-two. Our Sages teach that the world was created with 'Lamed-Beis Nesivos Chochma'. As the Targum Yerushalmi translates, 'B'Reishis'-'B'Chuchmasa', with wisdom the world was put into existence.

These thirty-two paths of wisdom are the twenty-two letters of the alphabet, plus the ten vowels that give them expression. Or, alternatively, the ten utterances by which Hashem created the world. It is these ten utterances that are revealed to Klal Yisrael as the Ten Commandments, but only after they uncover the 'lev' at the heart of creation, as they count the first thirty-two days of the Omer.

The thirty-third word in the Torah is 'Tov' - "Va'Yar Elokim Es HaOhr Ki Tov". This is the light that was hidden away for the Tzaddikim. It is this light that is revealed to Rebbe Shimon bar Yochai on the thirty-third day of the Omer, the Zohar that lights up the world - "Va'Hamaskilim Yazhiru K'Zohar HaRakia" (Daniel 12:3).

As an aside, it is interesting to note that this concept is the basis of the custom to light bonfires on the eve of Lag B'Omer.

It is this hidden 'tov' that is unveiled as the thirty-third day begins. As is stated: "Gal Einai V'Abitah Niflaos MiTorasecha" (Tehillim 119:18). "Gal" - as in 'reveal'. "Gal" - Lamed-Gimmel.

And: "Mah Rav Tuvecha Asher Tzofanta L'Yireacha" (Tehillim 31:20) - "How great is the Tov that You have secreted away for those who fear You".

2

How is all this accomplished by a simple act of counting?

Perhaps we can begin by analyzing a different Mitzva, one that is likewise performed by counting.

The Torah commands man to tithe his animals, and one of each ten is sanctified as "Kodesh L'Hashem".

"V'Chol Ma'asar Bakar VaTzon Kol Asher Ya'avur Tachas HaShavet HaAsiri Yihiyeh Kodesh L'Hashem" (VaYikra 27:32).

We are ordered specifically to count till ten. Our Sages derive from the word: 'HaAsiri', that the count must be certain, and an animal cannot be sanctified if there is any doubt as to which animal was tenth - "Asiri Vadai V'Lo Asiri Safek" (Bchoros 58b)

The basis of the ruling is this: counting MiSafek is an oxymoron.

Counting is not merely the coincidental lumping together of varied elements. Rather, every act of

counting is definitive and clarifying. The Hebrew word for counting - "LiSpor" - is the same as "L'Saper" - to relate. Both concepts entail the connecting of varied elements into one integrated unit. Similarly, the word "S'Par" is defined as a boundary, for a border clarifies and encapsules one integrated unit, highlighting its separate and distinct countours.

This is the purpose of Sefiras HaOmer. The Jewish people undergo a process of clarification. We cleanse ourselves of the impurities of Mitzraim. They take with them the bread of Mitzraim, sustenance for thirty days, until the fifteenth of Iyar. Only subsequently, when all trace of Egypt is gone, are they ready for manna from Heaven.

Like every Chazakah, three days of a manna diet are necessary in order to cement their change of status. And hence, on the eighteenth day of Iyar, the thirty-third day of the Omer, they were separated forever from the material world, and are ready to turn towards Kabbalas HaTorah.

It is the thirty-two days of counting that clarifies the pathways of Chochma. These days parallel the thirty-two times that the Divine Name - 'Elokim' - is mentioned in Ma'aseh B'reishis. The man who can successfully count to that point removes himself from the mundane grind of worldly existence and begins to actualize the 'Tzelem Elokim' of Ma'aseh B'reishis.

### 3

Let us explain.

What is Chochma? The Torah describes Betzalel, the architect of the Mishkan, as being blessed with those qualities that enable man to build a Divine sanctuary on earth: "V'Amalei Oso Ruach Elokim, B'Chochma U'V'Svuna U'V'Da'as..." (Shemos 31:3). Rashi (loc. cit.) defines Chochma as "what a man receives from others". This definition is essential, not circumstantial. Meaning to say: all wisdom - true Chochma - is beyond man's grasp. He MUST acquire it from others, for it stems from a different world - "V'HaChochma Mai'Ayin TiMatzei" (Iyov 28:12).

Chochma is 'MaiAyin. Just as all of creation is likewise: "Yesh Mai'Ayin". As the Targum, cited earlier, explains: 'B'reishis-"B'Chuchmasa". For these reasons, man is forewarned: "Da Mai'Ayin Bosa"- "Know that you come Mai'Ayin" (Avos 3:1) - and hence, attach yourself to the world above.

Counting thirty-two days connects us to that world of Chochma, one that is above and beyond our own. It brings us to Lag B'Omer, a day that reveals a hidden light to the world. It is this day that separates us from the world we left behind.

When Yaacov Avinu takes his family from the house of Lavan, he flees, as a weakling escaping in the night. Lavan quickly follows, and it is only the miraculous intervention of Hashem that protects Yaacov from harm.

The Shem MiShmuel asks: being that Yaacov certainly foresaw the need to rely on a miracle, why did he run? If, in any case, it would be ultimately necessary to confront Lavan directly, why not face

evil head on?

The answer is this: there are two ways for man to fight the evil inclination.

One method is to attempt to overpower the Yetzer HaRa, and a great reward awaits the man who can do so successfully.

Unfortunately, for many of us, we remain uncertain of our chances in such a confrontation.

But, there remains one other option.

Run.

Certainly, Yaacov Avinu was more than capable of defeating his own Yetzer HaRa, as the subsequent battle with the Angel of Esav demonstrates. Still, he hopes to put in place a method to help his descendants, those whose contact with evil is too strong to overcome. Therefore, he runs, and with this, he separates himself forever from a world of evil.

Yaacov and Lavan make a pact. Together, they erect a barrier that neither side will cross. From this point on, the children of Yaacov remain apart - "Am L'Vadad Yishkon".

"This 'Gal' is testimony...if I will not cross this 'Gal' to you, and you will not cross to me... (Breishis 31:52).

'Gal' marks the line. Here, the demarcation is clear. Pure. Complete.

Tamim.

The purity and holiness of Lag B'Omer and Rebbe Shimon bar Yochai.

Have a good Shabbos.

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