



לעילוי נשמת

Rachmon ben Sarach

Sha'arei Eliyahu

Table Talk

פרשת אחרי מות-קדשים

SHABBAT SCHEDULE

Mincha	7:00 PM
Candle Lighting	7:37 PM
Shacharit	8:30 AM
Shabbat Derasha	5:45 PM
Mincha	7:15 PM
SUNSET	7:56 PM
Aravit (Shabbat Ends)	8:43 PM
Rabbenu Tam	9:09 PM

זה לעומת זה עשה אלקים

On Yom Kippur we take two identical goats and make a lottery. One goat is chosen for HaShem and is brought as a korban while the other is first paraded across town and at the end of the parade is thrown off the cliff to Azazel. During this process there is a string that is tied. Once the goat for Azazel falls to its doom the string turns white indicating that the sins of the nation are forgiven. Why is this procedure called Azazel? It comes to hint at an important Klal (rule) in Judaism: When a person grows in his observance and becomes greater in holiness so does the power of the Yetzer Hara. Any time one grows in any area

SHORT & SWEET

What does one need to do with the Orlah after the brit is performed? The Orlah needs to bury it. Why? Because when HaShem created Adam HaRishon he was created without an Orlah (perfect). HaShem told him if you keep your Brti Holy then you will no longer need to perform a brit ever again. But once the Snake lived with Hava and its poison was transferred to her and she lived with Adam that poison was transferred into the Orlah of future generations. So HaShem said being that the poison was given by the snake the orlah needs to be fed to the snake which lives under the ground. This is why we bury it after performing the Brit.

~ R' Yosef Akilov

his Yetzer for that area grows as well. This rule doesn't just apply on an individual level but also on a larger scale as well. This can be seen in the following examples: when Avraham was around in the world his greatest nemesis was Nimrod, who stood against everything that Avraham held. It's no coincidence that when Avraham died the same day Nimrod was killed off by Esav. At this point the holiness of Avraham was with Yaakov and the power of the Yetzer Hara and Tuma (impurity) transferred from Nimrod to Esav. Rivka prophesized that both her children will be buried on the same day which came to pass. The next example is of Rav Yehoshua ben Hananya who used to debate with heretics and put them in their place (see Bechorot 8b where the Gemara lists 12 puzzles and debates that the sages of Athens put Rabbi Yehoshua through). The Gemara in Chagiga 5b relates as follows:

כי קא ניחא נפשיה דרבי יהושע בן חנניה אמרו ליה רבנן מאי תיהוי עלן מאפיקורוסיין אמר להם (ירמיהו מט, ז) אבדה עצה מבנים נסרחה חכמתם כיון שאבדה עצה מבנים נסרחה חכמתם של אומות העולם

- *When Rabbi Yehoshua ben Hananya was dying, the Sages said to him: What will become of us, from the threat of the heretics, when there is no scholar like you who can refute them? He said to them that the verse states: "Is wisdom no more in Teiman? Has counsel perished from the prudent? Has their wisdom vanished?" (Yeremiyahu 49:7). He explained, since counsel has perished from the prudent [Jewish people] the wisdom of the nations of the world has vanished as well.*

This principle is called זה לעומת זה עשה אלקים. The first letters of this phrase are the same letters as Azazel (עזאזל). In other words this [Yetzer Hara] against this [Yetzer Tov] HaShem has made. HaShem should protect us and we should beat the Yetzer Hara and not the other way around.

~ R' Yosef Akilov

Shabbat Shalom U'Mevorach

1. Why is Yom Kippur one of the happiest days of the year?
2. Why was the Kohen Gadol's white linen Yom Kippur uniform buried every year after use, and not saved for the next year's services?
3. Why does HaShem want us to fast on Yom Kippur, while abstaining from work and the comfort of bathing and wearing leather shoes?
4. When would union cause separation?

1. Yom Kippur is a most happy day since the ugly blemishes created by one's sins are cleaned away, and we renew our close relationship with Hashem. Many people are given a new lease on life. Heavenly anger is often eliminated. A fresh new start is given to everyone to enhance their service of Hashem. Yom Kippur is actually the very day that Jews received the second luchos and the Torah. It is on this day that Avraham Avinu performed the Brit Mila with self-sacrifice, and in that merit Hashem designated this as an annual Day of Atonement and forgiveness for his descendants. {Ta'amt 26b, Pirkai D'Rebbi Eliezer 29}

2. The Kohen Gadol's white linen uniform was symbolically buried every year as a gesture: "Surely now that we were cleansed of sin, and have been raised to such a spiritual high, we will retain this holiness and not need to go through this whole atonement procedure again next year." {Ta'amt Veda'at, Eitz Yosef on Vayikra Rabbah 21:10}

3. Hashem instructs us to lesson our physical pleasure on Yom Kippur so that we become humbled, and do teshuva "faster" With less attention to the body and more attention to the soul one will get his priorities right. {Ridbaz}

4. A married woman who commits adultery must be divorced by her husband. Her union with a forbidden person causes her to lose the union that she was intended to have. {Sotah 27}

Taking Haircuts and Shaving During the Omer Period

Abstaining from Taking Haircuts During the Omer

It has become customary among the Jewish nation to refrain from taking haircuts during the Omer counting period: According to the Ashkenazi custom, until the 33rd day of the Omer and according to the Sephardic custom, until the morning of the 34th day of the Omer (as we have already explained regarding getting married during the Omer). Some Sephardic individuals act leniently with regards to haircuts in accordance with the Ashkenazi custom, i.e. taking haircuts beginning from the 33rd day of the Omer. Those who act leniently in this regard (even Sephardic individuals) have on whom to rely.

Shaving

Those who are truly G-d-fearing customarily abstain from shaving their beard during the Omer period as well. However, there are those who rule leniently for individuals who are truly distressed as a result of not shaving their beard, for the Radbaz writes regarding such matters which are not actual obligations as a result of an edict of our Sages and is merely a custom, in a case of such distress, there is room for leniency. Nevertheless, it is indeed correct and proper to follow this custom which was observed by our ancestors for many generations with regards to refraining from shaving one's beard during the Omer period (it is especially worthy to be stringent until Rosh Chodesh Iyar).

The Status of Women Regarding these Laws

Women are not included in the prohibition of taking haircuts during the days of the Omer, for even with regards to actual mourning for a relative who has passed away (for which a male mourner must abstain from taking a haircut for the entire thirty-day mourning period), Maran Ha'Shulchan Aruch rules that women are not included in this prohibition and are permitted to take haircuts during the thirty-day mourning period. If so, this would certainly apply to the mourning customs observed during the Omer period in that a woman need not abstain from taking a haircut. The same would apply to the three week period between the Seventeenth of Tammuz and the Ninth of Av that the prohibition to take haircuts applies to men alone, however, women are permitted to take haircuts.

Yom Ha'atzma'ut (Israeli Independence Day)

In the previous generation, there were those who acted leniently and permitted taking haircuts and shaving on *Yom Ha'atzma'ut*. Nevertheless, halachically speaking, one should not act leniently regarding this matter. Similarly, one should not get married on this day either.

Lag Ba'Omer (The 33rd Day of the Omer)

The 33rd day of the Omer is a day of festivity and rejoicing in honor of the saintly Tanna, Rabbi Shimon bar Yochai. There are indeed sources for this among the Poskim. We are therefore customarily more joyous than usual on this day and we do not recite *Tachanun* (supplication prayers). This year, 5775, *Lag Ba'Omer* falls out this coming Thursday, beginning from Wednesday night.

Most people commonly refer to *Lag Ba'Omer* as being the day that Rabbi Shimon bar Yochai passed on. However, Hagaon Sho'el U'Meshiv expressed wonder about this, for if so, we should not be joyful at all as one does not rejoice about the demise of the righteous! Nevertheless, the Responsa Shem Aryeh writes that the reason why we rejoice on this day is because of what the Gemara in Masechet Shabbat (33b) writes that the evil kingdom had decreed death upon Rabbi Shimon bar Yochai and a miracle occurred and hid in a cave and was saved from certain death by the hands of the wicked Romans. We must therefore celebrate joyously on the day he departed from this world in a natural way in order to give thanks for the miracle that happened to him.

Regarding the actual idea that Rabbi Shimon bar Yochai passed away on *Lag Ba'Omer*, Maran Ha'Chida writes that it is incorrect that Rabbi Shimon passed away on this day and whoever says so is mistaken. He proves this from the teachings of Hagaon Rabbeinu Shmuel Vital who writes lengthily about the deep secrets of the Omer period and especially *Lag Ba'Omer* and he does not mention once that this day is the anniversary of Rabbi Shimon bar Yochai's passing. He therefore writes that the reason for the joy and celebration on this day is possibly because Rabbi Akiva began teaching his five pupils who rejuvenated the world by disseminating their Torah all over the world and this spring indeed gave us life until this very day. Similarly, Hagaon Peri Chadash writes that the primary reason for rejoicing on this day is because of the students of Rabbi Akiva who stayed alive and spread Torah to the entire world. Since from this day on these students stayed among the living, we therefore hold festivities on this day.

Some customarily visit the grave of Rabbi Shimon bar Yochai on the day of *Lag Ba'Omer* and to pray and read as much Tehillim as they can there. However, every individual must think deeply before performing any action to see if it will indeed be worthy before Hashem. Thus, before one decides to visit the graves of the righteous on *Lag Ba'Omer*, one must evaluate whether this is indeed worthwhile in all aspects.

The Sefer Sedeh Chemed writes that on the day of *Lag Ba'Omer*, the secrets of the Torah were revealed by Rabbi Shimon bar Yochai. This was also the day that Rabbi Shimon received Semicha (ordination). It is for this reason that we rejoice on this day. He writes that the Torah scholars in Teveria in his generation wrote likewise.

Rabbeinu Chaim Vital (principle pupil of the holy Ari z"l) writes: "I have seen my master, the Ari z"l, visit the graves of Rabbi Shimon bar Yochai and his son Rabbi Elazar on the day of *Lag Ba'Omer*. He and his entire family stayed there for three days. This was during the first time that he arrived from Egypt (the Ari z"l lost his father at a young age and he and his mother went to live with his uncle in Egypt). However, I do not know if at that point he was an expert in the tremendous wisdom he gleaned afterwards. Rabbi Yonatan Sagis has told me that before I had gone to learn by my master, Rabbeinu Ha'Ari z"l took his young son there along with his entire family and it was there that he shaved his son's head in accordance with the known custom. He made there a day of joy and feasting. I have written all of this in order to show that there is a source for the aforementioned custom."

Hagaon Harav Yonah Navon zt"l (rabbi of Maran Ha'Chida) writes that the custom in the holy city of Jerusalem has become to hold joyous festivities when a child receives his first haircut because of the Mitzvah of not cutting the hair on the side of the head (side locks) completely and by doing so, the Mitzvah of "Do not round off the corners of your head" is fulfilled.