

PARSHAS EMOR



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PART 1 - DO YOU KNOW HOW TO COUNT?

PART 2 - GETTING TOGETHER WITH HASHEM ON SHABBOS



WHY WE COUNT SEFIRAS HAOMER

וספרתם לכם ממחרת השבת מיום הביאכם את עמר התנופה שבע שבתות תמימת תהייה. עד ממחרת השבת השביעת תספרו חמשים יום והקרבתם מנחה חדשה לה'.¹

“And from the day on which you bring the sheaf of elevation offering - the day after the Sabbath - you shall count off seven complete weeks. [You must count] until the day after the seventh week - fifty days; then you shall bring an offering [of new grain] to Hashem.” (Vayikra 23:15-16)

I want to share with you an original *yesod* that I heard from my grandfather (Rav Avigdor Miller). I’m assuming that it’s a *yesod* from Slabodka, because he told me that he didn’t say anything over unless it was in his Rebbe’s name, because everything he said was from his Rebbe. So I assume this is a Slabodka *yesod*. Regarding the *mitzvah* of *sefiras haomer*, which we find in this week’s *parshah*, we mentioned that there are various schools of thought regarding the concept of counting: You count to demonstrate your anxiousness to come to Shavuos. You count the *yemei hataharah*, the days of purification. The Zeida said over another *pshat* in *Sefiras Haomer*, which is a beautiful *pshat*. He said, the *mitzvah* of *sefirah* is a very unique *mitzvah*. From the time that Yehoshua entered Eretz Yisrael, we’ve been counting *sefirah*. Even when we went into *galus* and we couldn’t bring the *omer* anymore, we continued counting from Pesach until Shavuos, as we still do.

Now, from a simple reading of the above *passuk*, it appears that the purpose of counting is to know when to celebrate Shavuos, like it says in the *passuk*, that seven weeks after the first day of Pesach when you begin counting, you should celebrate Shavuos. So what’s the necessity of counting? Let the *beis din* count. It’s not for me to establish when Yom Tov is. *Beis din* establishes when it is, so the *beis din* should count. We know that every single person counts, as it says in the *drashah* שחיהא ספירה לכל אחד ואחד, the counting has to be done by every single person. It’s a very strange thing. There is a national *mitzvah* to count. That means that the counting must be for more than to know when Shavuos is. You don’t need the entire Klal Yisrael to count in order to know when Shavuos is.

EACH MITZVAH IS A KLAL

My Zeida said over a *yesod* brought down in the *sefer Ma’alos HaTorah*. *Ma’alos HaTorah* is a *sefer* written by the Vilna Gaon’s brother, Rav Avraham, who teaches us a major principle from the Gr”a in that *sefer*. He says that every single *mitzvah* is a *klal*, a general rule. The 613 *mitzvos* means 613 rules. Now why is that so important? What’s the *chiddush* of that? Can you tell me what’s the *chiddush* in saying that the *mitzvos* are not just *mitzvos* but they are *klalim*, rules?

What that is saying is as follows: that every single *mitzvah* is much more and much greater than the actual action of the *mitzvah*. A rule means it’s far-reaching, and there are principles that create models, and these are models that should guide us in many areas of our lives. The *mitzvah* to put on *tefillin* is not just to wrap something on your hand and on your head. The *mitzvah* of counting the *Omer* is much greater than just knowing when Shavuos is. So even though we’re not allowed to add to any of the *mitzvos*, we always have to figure out and we have to determine, what is the greater message that Hashem wishes that we should gain from the *mitzvah*? We should study it and we should live by it.

Now that is a major *yesod*. It means that the counting of the *omer* is much greater than what it appears to be. We now want to understand in which way.

BESEECHING HASHEM FOR YIRAS HASHEM

I still hear my Zeida’s words ringing in my ears. He said there’s a *passuk* in *Tehillim* in Chapter 90 that we say every Shabbos morning that relates to counting.¹ You know what that is? למנות ימינו, to count our days, כן הודע, teach me. Make known to me how to count our days. We say it every Shabbos morning. Dovid Hamelech *davened* to Hashem - that means he begged Hashem. He entreated Hashem: Please Hashem teach us how to count our days properly.

Now, if you wouldn’t have the word “*ken*” there, you might have thought that Dovid Hamelech was *davening* to Hashem and asking him: Please teach Klal Yisrael how to count. Part of life is learning how to count. When kids are little, their mommy says one, two, three. How many? After four, the kid says, “Ten” because he doesn’t know how to count. But it says למנות ימינו כן הודע, the word *ken* means properly. When the daughters of Tzelofchad came and made a request of Moshe Rabeinu and Moshe Rabeinu answered them בנות צלפחד דוברות, כן בנות צלפחד דוברות, the daughters of Tzelofchad are speaking correctly. So למנות ימינו כן הודע means to count our days properly. That’s the keyword over here. You have to understand what it means to count your days properly. What does that mean?

The *passuk* itself says the answer. You only know the first part of the *passuk*. The second part of the *passuk* says, if we will count our days properly, ונבא לבב חכמה, You’ll help us get a mind of wisdom. If you count your days properly, it’s going to bring you to be a wise man. You’re going to have a mind of wisdom. If you don’t count your days properly, you’re going to be short on wisdom.

¹ למנות ימינו כן הודע ונבא לבב חכמה.

WISDOM IS YIRAS HASHEM

Now what does wisdom mean? What do we mean by לִבְכּוֹת חִכְמָה? The answer is, there is a *passuk* that says הֵן יִרְאֵת הִיא חִכְמָה. You want to know what proper *yiras Hashem* is? To have *chachmah*.

Now you have to understand that. How is *yiras Hashem* a *chachmah*? That's a major *chiddush*. I remember when I was a little boy, once I was walking in the street with my grandfather and he was telling me this *passuk* and he was asking me, "What does that mean? *Yiras Hashem* is *chachmah*? *Yiras Hashem* means fear of Hashem." I remember him telling me, "Some people think that growing long beards and wearing long coats and big *peyos* and special hats, that's *yiras Hashem*." People think that *yiras Hashem* is an external action. *Yiras Hashem* is something completely internal, and that's why it says it's a *chachmah*, because *chachmah* is not external. *Chachmah* is internal. The question is, what does that mean that *yiras Hashem* is *chachmah*?

The *Mesillas Yesharim* writes in his introduction: You know what that means that *yiras Hashem* is *chachmah*?² It means it is *chachmah*. It is the **only** thing that's *chachmah*. The only wisdom that exists is *yiras Hashem*. הִיא חִכְמָה וְהִיא לְבִדָּה חִכְמָה. If you don't have *yiras Hashem*, you know what that means? You don't have *chachmah*. If you don't have *yiras Hashem*, you don't have *chachmah*. So if I call you a dummy and you get bent out of shape, "Why are you calling me a dummy? I know how to count until 1000." You're still a dummy if you have no *yiras Hashem*. הֵן יִרְאֵת הִיא חִכְמָה, if you have *yiras Hashem* that's *chachmah*.

AWARENESS OF HASHEM ALL OUR DAYS

Now the question is, what does *yiras Hashem* mean? A big *yesod* in Slabodka is that the word *yarei*, which means to be afraid, comes from the word *ra'ah*, or *liros*, which means "to see." When a person doesn't see, he's not afraid. When a person is ignorant, he walks around happy. He doesn't realize what there is to be afraid of. A man is afraid only when he sees what's coming down the pipe. *Yirah* is a form of seeing.

This is the whole point of *Sefiras Haomer*. *Sefiras Haomer* is to lead you to count your days. That's what the *mitzvah* of *Sefiras Haomer* means: You count the days between Pesach until *kabalas HaTorah*, and that *mitzvah* is a *klal*. It's a rule. That means it's to train you to count your days all your life.

The purpose of counting your days is to acquire *yiras Hashem*, which means seeing Hashem. *Yiras Hashem* means being aware of Hashem. If you know that *yiras Hashem* means being aware of Hashem, and you have awareness of Hashem, then you have *chachmah*. If you say: But I can't see Hashem, so if I can't see Hashem, how am I supposed to be aware of Him? That means you have no *chachmah* and you have no *yirah*, because everything in this world teaches you about the existence of Hashem, and everything in this world leads you to be aware of Hashem, and have fear, awe, that's based on awareness of Hashem.

Here's a person who, when the *rebbe* is not in the room, is not afraid. The *rebbe* can't be seen, so he's not afraid. But if the *rebbe* is in the room or the *tatty* is around, you have an awareness, so then you act properly and you act correctly. ראשית חכמה, the highest wisdom in the world, is *yiras Hashem*.

Now, every time you learn, you become more aware of Hashem. Learning Torah makes you aware of Hashem. I remember every time my grandfather sat and learned Torah, he would say, "I'm learning the Torah which Hashem taught me. I'm learning Rashi that Hashem taught me. I'm learning Tosfos that Hashem taught me." You know what that made him? That made him very much aware of Hashem all the time. He used to always emphasize when the *gemara* says רַחֲמָנָא אָמַר, he didn't *teitch* 'the Torah says.' You know what he said? He used to *teitch*, 'The Merciful One, the Merciful Hashem said.' That's what he said. He always related to the Torah as an expression of the *da'as* and the *ratzon* of Hashem.

CONNECTING THROUGH TORAH AND DAVENING

A person could be very, very *frum*, but he never worked on his awareness of Hashem. I always say this story over. There was once a fine *yungerman*, a very fine *yungerman*. He *shteiged*, he wrote *sefarim*, he was a very *chashuve* person. One time, I watched him learn for a few hours straight, the entire second *seder*. I was sitting on the bench next to his bench, watching him and I was overwhelmed. I was impressed. He learned non-stop. At the end of the *seder* when everybody walked out, he stayed there for a moment. I slid into the bench next to him and I said, "Reb so and so, may I ask you a question?" He said, "Sure." I said, "What is the last big *mitzvah* that you did?" He looked at me, he opened big eyes. It's not a regular question that people ask you. And he said, "I can't think of it." I said, "No, no, I know you know. I know you know. You did it. What's the last big *mitzvah* that you did?" He *mamash* was working on it, trying to come up with it. I said, "May I ask you a question?" I said, "Tell me, how much did you learn today?" And he showed me where he started and where he ended. I counted the words. I said you learned with a *chavrusa*, and you translated. The Chafetz Chaim says it's about 200 words a minute. For every word of *gemara* that you learn, every single word, you get the *sechar* of *talmud Torah*, the biggest *mitzvah*. תלמוד תורה כנגד כולם. He learned Rashi, and he learned Tosfos. He just finished hours of learning with thousands of *mitzvos* - but he was not aware at all of Hashem! He learned Torah. He was not aware at all that he was bonding with Hashem and doing the *ratzon* of Hashem.

That's what my Zeida used to say. Just because you're *frum*, doesn't mean that you're aware of your days and that you're aware of Hakadosh Baruch Hu. The more aware you are, the more of a *yarei Shamayim* you'll be.

When a person learned a *seder* and he fulfilled a number of commandments of Hashem, you would think there would be an awareness and a connection. Imagine if there would be an army officer giving you commands, directions on what to do, and he's giving you commands for three hours. He's telling you how to behave. If you were asked, "When was the last time you listened to this officer?" You would say, "Just now." Because you're aware of him. You're aware. In a similar way, we have to be aware of Hashem.

Now there are many people who *daven* and are not aware that they're talking to Hashem, so they don't get *yiras Hashem*. If you were aware that you're talking to Hashem, you would get *yiras Hashem* from *davening*. If you did a *mitzvah* of *chessed* and

² וְהִנֵּה הַכְּתוּב אָמַר (איוב כח, כח): הֵן יִרְאֵת הִיא חִכְמָה, וְאָמְרוּ רַבּוּתֵינוּ ז"ל (שבת לא): הֵן – אֶחָת, שֶׁכֵּן בְּלִשׁוֹן וְיֵי קוֹרִין לְאַחַת הֵן. הִרִי שֶׁהִירָאָה הִיא חִכְמָה וְהִיא לְבִדָּה חִכְמָה, וּדְאִי שְׂאִין נִקְרָא חִכְמָה מִה שְׂאִין בּו עֵינָיו.

you were aware of Hashem - if you were aware it's Hashem's commandment, and Hashem's will - you would get *yiras Shamayim*. If you would hold back from doing an *aveirah* because it's an *aveirah* and you don't want to become toast, you don't want to suffer, and you think, Hashem told me not to do this, that's called having an awareness of Hashem.

THE AWARENESS OF TIME PASSING

My Zeida lived his entire life with this principle. He was counting every single thing he saw in this world, he was counting every minute, and every day. I remember him telling me, "Why do we have a sun and a moon?" Why did Hashem have to create the sun and then the moon? So my Zeida said: You look back in the *chumash*. You know what it says in the *chumash*? That Hashem put these great luminaries in the sky, להבדיל בין היום ובין הלילה, to separate between day and night. Now the question is, it also says in the *passuk* that Hashem created the days, the *yamim*, for different days. That's a major concept. Hashem put the sun and the moon to teach us that there are different units of days. Let's say there would be a sun and it will always be there. You wouldn't know when the day started. You wouldn't know when the day ended. So Hashem created separate days. You know why? Hashem wants you to experience the passing of time. Hashem wants you to be conscious of the passing of time.

Now if you think about it, it's an amazing idea. No one ever thought that Hashem put the sun and the moon for days, so that we should be aware of the passing of time. You hear that? You know why? Because if you have one long day, it's very easy to waste that day because you think you have a lot of time. But when you see the sun coming up, beginning a new day, and the sun going down, you see time passing, and people know now it's time to go to sleep, it's time to wake up, it's time to produce. There's a time for everything.

That's exactly what each one of us has to take from *Sefiras Haomer*. Today, we counted day 23. You have to ask yourself: Did you count that day with awareness? Was this day counted in a way that you actually were aware of Hashem on this day? Did you learn Torah on this day? Were you aware of Hashem when you learned Torah? Not just you, everybody. You're aware of other things. People are aware of what they want to be aware of. Very few people are aware of the fact that time is passing and you have to *chap arein*. We all have plenty of time to waste. We can afford many hours of a wasted day, and every time you waste a day, it means it's not counted. And if you don't count, it's going to be counted against you.

APPRECIATING THE VALUE OF YOUR TIME

My Zeida lived with such an awareness of time and the value of time. He used to say he's very sorry but he can't waste his life. When he came for my *chasunah* in Cleveland it was the only time he traveled anywhere on a plane! He never traveled anywhere. He told me, yes, that he would come. I asked him right away when I got engaged. He was excited that I did a *shidduch* with the *Rosh Yeshivah* of Telz's daughter. He was excited about it, for a number of reasons. And he said yes, he will come. Then, as it came closer to the *chasunah*, he realized it would be way too costly for him to come to the *chasunah*. It would mean giving up an entire day of his life. From the time he left until the time he came back it would be very costly for him and he couldn't afford it. He called me and he said, "I'm sorry, but I don't think I can make it to the wedding. It's too costly. It's my life." I was disappointed.

So I went to my grandmother. I said, "Bubby, could you help me out?" She said, "Yeah. Did your mother buy the tickets already?" "Yeah." "Go tell him that your mother already purchased the tickets, because right now, he doesn't have a lot of funds" - it was a few hundred dollars, \$300 back in those days for a ticket - "and then he'll come." So I went back there and said, "Zeida, my mother already bought tickets." He said, "She did already?" I said, "Yeah." It was close to the *chasunah*. So he said to me, "How much were they?" I told him. "Okay, I'll think about it." And then he contacted me again. He said, "I'll come, but you're going to help me with my time. So when I come, I don't want to come to the *yeshivah*. I want to stay in Cleveland Heights in somebody's house. And I want no one to know that I'm there. I want to be able to conduct my schedule as normally as possible. And I'll come to the *chasunah*." And that's what he did.

He did come to the *yeshivah* because the *chuppah* was in the *yeshivah*. I remember he had great respect for Telz. He wanted to walk around the perimeter of the campus. That's what he wanted to do. He told me to show him where it starts. I said, "Zeida, it goes into the woods." He said, "We can walk in the woods. It's fine." He walked in the woods. He walked in the fields behind the houses, behind the *yeshivah*. He came into the *yeshivah* because the *chosson's tish* was in Telz, but he just showed up after it all started. That's how he lived his life. He was counting every minute. He was aware of Hashem like you can't imagine!

WHAT TO THINK AT A CHASUNAH

I remember standing at a different *chasunah* with him when he turned to me and said, "What are you thinking now?" It was at the *chuppah*. "What are you thinking now?" I said, "I'm thinking how nice the *chuppah* is, how happy I am for the people." He said, "Think that we're sitting here and doing a great act of *chessed* with this *chosson* and *kallah* and their families. We're here to bring joy to them, to add joy to them." Now, that's having an awareness of Hashem.

Rabosai, counting means being aware if you're wasting your days or not. When the new day comes up, you have to look forward with excitement: What am I going to accomplish today? When the day sets, you have to ask: Did you accomplish? You still have a nice amount of hours left today. Count those hours. That's why Hashem breaks it down into units of hours. The year is also broken down into months. There are *chodashim*. Every Rosh Chodesh, it says זמן כפרה. It's a *zman kapparah*. You have to think: What did I do during the last thirty days? When there's a Yom Kippur Katan before Rosh Chodesh, you have to think: How did I use my last month? Did I use it properly? Next month I'm going to do better. I'm going to make it count.

And if a person does that, it's called fulfilling the mitzvah of *sefirah* the way Hashem intended.

GETTING TOGETHER WITH HASHEM ON SHABBOS

The first *mo'ed* the Torah writes about is the *mo'ed* called Shabbos. So we're going to take a look at something we once mentioned before; we'll mention it again today in order to add something. It should set the tone for the *sugya* and the discussions on the topic of Shabbos for this *zman*.

The *parshah* of the *mo'adim* begins by saying: *“speak to the Bnei Yisrael and say to them: These are the mo'edim, that you shall call קודש; these are my mo'adim.”* (Vayikra 23:2) The Torah then mentions the day of Shabbos, followed by the other *Yamim Tovim*, וגו', *“six days you shall do work and on the seventh day it will be Shabbos, a day of rest,”* which is the pasuk calls קודש (v. 3).

Now, there's a very fundamental Seforno on this *passuk* that everybody has to know.³ You should all look it up and drill it into yourselves. The Torah says you should call the *mo'adim* קודש. What is the meaning of קודש? In English, they translate it as 'holy convocations'. I don't know what either one of those words mean. The Seforno says what it means as follows. Firstly, he says what is the definition of the word מועד - *mo'ed*? A *mo'ed* is a meeting place, as it says about the Ohel Mo'ed, אשר אועד לכם שמה, - where I shall meet with you (Shemos 30:6).

THE REAL PURPOSE OF MOADIM: IT IS KULO LASHEM

The Seforno points out that the *parshah* of *mo'adim* follows the *parshah* of *korbanos* (Parshas Tetzaveh, Shemos 29:42), which talks about the *korbanos* and the *kohanim* who bring the *korbanos*. What is the whole purpose of *korbanos*? It's a way to become closer to Hakodosh Boruch Hu. Hashem gave us certain vehicles that make His presence more felt and more pronounced. *Korbanos* are one of the most powerful vehicles of bringing *khal Yisrael* and Hakodosh Boruch Hu together. It serves to be *mashreh* the *Shechinah b'Yisrael*. That's why the *Ohel Mo'ed* is called the *Ohel Mo'ed* - it says אשר אועד לך שמה, because it's a tent of meeting, it's a place where you get together, you meet with Hakodosh Boruch Hu. That's what the Ohel Mo'ed is; that's what the Mishkan is.

So the Seforno explains that after the *korbanos*, it talks about the *mo'ed* because the purpose of a *mo'ed* is for us to become closer to Hakodosh Boruch Hu. Most people are under the impression that the purpose of a Shabbos and a Yom Tov is because we all need breaks. That's not the purpose. The Seforno says as follows: The first thing, the first *kavanah* that a person has to have when he approaches a *mo'ed* - whether it's Shabbos or one of the other *mo'adim* - is that he is going to cease from his *maaseh hedyot*, his ordinary conduct. That's how you connect with Hashem. He says, for some *mo'adim* you are going to cease totally from your *maaseh hedyot*, and for some of them, you're going to cease partially. On Shabbos and Yom HaKippurim, you have to cease totally from *maaseh hedyot*; these are days, he says, that are given to us לעסוק בתורה ועסקי קודש. The entire purpose for Shabbos and Yom Kippur, from the beginning to end, is to be involved in Torah and לעסוק בכולם בתורה ועסקי קודש, like it says in the Aseres Hadibros, ויום לא נתנו שבתות וימים טובים אלא לעסוק בדברי, *kulo laHashem Elokechah*, (Shemos 20:10), that means the *eisek* has to be *kulo laHashem Elokechah*, אלוהיך 'השביעי שבת לה תורה

Now, this is a tremendous *yesod* that most Jews, I believe, have never heard of. And therefore, they have never experienced *shemiras Shabbos*. Because a person has to realize that the Torah says: ויום השביעי שבת לה אלוהיך. The Seforno says that means it's 'כולו' לה, entirely *laHashem*. That is, ללמוד וללמד לשמור ולעשות. You hear that?!

SO HOW CAN WE HAVE ONEG SHABBOS?

Now, the big question on this is: How does this line up with the concept of *oneg Shabbos*? When we were children, it was very common to have “*Oneg Shabbos*.” *Yeshiva bachurim* today like to have more of an adult *Oneg Shabbos*; they like to imbibe in some *mashkeh*, *mashkaos charifim*, and they make their own *Oneg Shabbos*. A children's *Oneg Shabbos*, an adult's *Oneg Shabbos* it's the same thing. And if you ask most people, they know one thing. *sleep on Shabbos brings pleasure*. Every *am haaretz* knows that. And that's how you know it's definitely not a mitzvah like they say it is, because if it was, you could be sure all the *am haaratzim* would not be doing it!⁴

So the *shaaleh* is what's the *pshtat*? What's *pshtat* in the mitzvah of *oneg Shabbos*?

³ מועדי ה' אשר תקראו אותם מקראי קודש. אחר שדבר בענין הקרבנות ומקריביהם שהכונה בהם השרות השכינה בישראל כאמרו עולת תמיד לדורותיכם פתח אהל מועד לפני ה' אשר אועד לכם שמה דבר במועדים אשר בשביתתם יכין לשובות ממעשה הדיוט בקצתם לגמרי כענין בשבת ויום הכפורים ולעסוק בכולם בתורה ועסקי קודש, כאמרו "ששת ימים תעבוד וכו' ויום השביעי שבת לה' אלהיך" שתשבות ממלאכתך ויהיה עסקך כולו לה' אלהיך ובקצתם תהיה השביתה ממלאכת עבודה בלבד כמו שהוא הענין בשאר המועדים והכונה בהם שנים שמחת היום שישמח ישראל בעושייו יהיה העסק בקצתו בעסקי קודש כאמרו ז"ל יום טוב חציו לה' וחציו לכם ובהזת תשרה שכינה על ישראל בלי ספק כאמרו אלהים נצב בעדת אל אמר אותם מועדים שתקראו אותם מקראי קודש פירוש אסיפות עם לעסקי קודש כי אסיפת העם תקרא מקרא כמו חדש ושבת קראו מקרא וכן על מנחם הר ציון ועל מקראי אלה הם מועדי. הם אותם המועדים שאצרה בהם אמנם שלא תקראו אותם מקראי קודש אבל יהיו מקראי חול ועסק בחיי שעה ותענוגות בני האדם בלבד לא יהיו מקראי אבל יהיו מועדיכם שנהג נפש.

⁴ כתוב בשולחן ערוך, אורח חיים רל"א, ד"ה שכל כוונותיו יהיו לשם שמים, וז"ל: אם אי אפשר לו ללמוד בלא שינת הצהרים יישן. ובלבד שלא יאריך בה שאסור לישן ביום יותר משינת הסוס שהוא שתינ נשמי ואף בזה המעט לא תהא כוונתו להנאת גופו אלא להחזיק גופו לעבודת הש"י. וכן בכל מה שיהנה בעוה"ז לא יכוון להנאתו אלא לעבודת הבורא. יתברך דכתיב בכל דרכיך דעהו ואמרו חכמים כל מעשיך יהיו לש"ש שאפילו דברים של רשות כגון האכילה והשתיה וההליכה והשיבה והקימה והתשמש והשינה וכל צרכי גופך יהיו כולם לעבודת בוראך או לדבר הגורם עבודתו, וכו'. וכן בשכיבה אין צורך לומר שבזמן שיכול לעסוק בתורה ובמצות לא יתגרה בשינה לענג עצמו אלא אפי' בזמן שהוא יגע וצריך לישן כדי לנוח מיגיעתו אם עשה להנאת גופו אינו משובח אלא יתכוין לתת שינה לעיניו ולגופו מנחה לצורך הבריאות שלא תטרף דעתו בתורה מחמת נמית השינה וכו'. [כתב כף החיים שם, וז"ל: וקודם שיישן יאמר הריני מוכן ליישן כדי שתהא דעתי צלולה ומיושבת עלי' לעבודת הש"י]. ובשבת יוסיף ומשום עונג שבת כמאמר ר"ל שינה בשבת תענוג ויה"ר מלפניך שתזכני שאריותי בשינתי ולא אפסיד בה וברחמיך הרבים תחפץ בנו ותצרצנו ויהי נועם וכו' אך יאנוס עצמו שלא יישן כאשר יוכל דאית יומי דינום טובה ויפה שעה אחת של תורה ומע"ט בעוה"ז מכל חיי העוה"ב וזה כלל גדול בתורה; ועוד כתב ערוך השולחן, אורח חיים ר"צ, וז"ל: ואם רגיל בשינת צהרים - אל יבטלנו, דעונג הוא לו ושינה בשבת תענוג. ואסור לומר: אישן כדי לעשות מלאכה בערב, ואפילו כדי ללמוד בערב - דזהו כמכין משבת לחול, אלא יישן כדי לנוח בשבת. ואחר סעודת שחרית ואחר השינה קובעים מדרש לקרא בנביאים ולדרוש בדברי אגדה, והטור הביא מדרש שאמרה תורה לפני הקב"ה: כשיכנסו ישראל לארץ זה רץ לרכומו וזה לשדוהו, ואני מה תהא עלי. אמר לה: יש לי זוג שאני מזווג לך ושבת שמו, והם בטילין ממלאכתך ויכולין לעסוק בך ע"ש, וכו'; ועוד כתוב בשם לוחות הברית, עשרת הדברות, מסכת שבת, נר מצוה, וז"ל: שינה בשבת תענוג, ובלבד שלא ירבה בו יותר מדאי שלא יביאנו לבטול התורה, כי לא יאירו שבתות אלא לגירסא. ואיתא במדרש, אמרה תורה לפני הקב"ה, רבש"ן, כשיכנסו ישראל לארץ זה רץ לרכומו וזה רץ לשדוהו, ואני מה תהא עלי, וכו'. ואע"ג דאיתא בירושלמי (שבת פט"ו, ה"ג) רבי חגי בר שמואל בר נחמן אמר, לא נתנו שבתות וימים טובים אלא לאכילה ושתייה כו', ורבי ברכיה בשם רבי חייא בר אבא אמר לא נתנו שבתות וימים טובים אלא לעסוק בדברי תורה. ובתנחומא מפרש ולא פליג, מה דאמר רבי ברכיה לתלמוד תורה, אלו הפועלים שהן עוסקין במלאכה כל ימות השבוע, ובשבת הן מתאספין לעסוק בדברי תורה. ומה שאמר רבי חגי לתענוג, אלו תלמידי חכמים שהם יגיעים בתורה כל ימי השבוע, ובשבת הן מתענוגים, עד כאן (ע"י פ"ר כג). ח"ו אין הפירוש שיבלו כל היום בתענוג, רק משכו בתענוג יותר משאר הימים, אבל חלילה לפרוש מן התורה, וכולי עלמא מודים בשבת נתנה תורה (שבת פ"ב, א) ואדרבה חייב אדם לראות בכל שבת ושבת לחדש חידושי התורה, כמו שאיתא בזוהר (ח"ג קעג, א) שבמוצאי שבת בחזרת נשמה יתירה למקומה שואל אותה הקדוש ברוך הוא מה חידוש היה מחדש בתוך.

Not only that, do you know what it says? It says in the gemara (Shabbos 118b): כל המענג את השבת נותנין לו נחלה בלי מצרים, “anyone who delights in the Shabbos, Hashem gives him a boundless portion.” Do you think that if a person takes a four-hour nap on Shabbos afternoon, then they’re giving him נחלה בלי מצרים? How could it be such a thing? If a guy sleeps sixteen hours out of twenty-four hours of Shabbos, and he gets נחלה בלי מצרים?! Does that make any sense? A guy eats, he goes to *kiddush* clubs, he *chaps arein kiddushim*, he goes house hopping, *succah* hopping, all these hoppings all around, so he gets נחלה בלי מצרים?! It has to make sense. Even a child understands better than that, that you have to do something meaningful to get a נחלה בלי מצרים. What’s the *pshat*? How does *oneg Shabbos shtim* with the idea that Shabbos is entirely for Hashem?

UNDERSTANDING REAL ONEG SHABBOS

You see another thing: The gemara (Shabbos 119a) tells us about how the greatest of the greats prepared themselves an *oneg Shabbos*. They went crazy for *oneg Shabbos*. You don’t find that the Gedolim cooked for Yom Tov. It doesn’t say that. But when it came to Shabbos, you find they made fish - רבא מלה שיבוטא. It says that Rava made special fish. The gemara gives a whole list of things and the Shulchan Aruch (O.C. 342 and 350:1) brings examples, about what kind of *kavod* for Shabbos they did. But how come when it came to Yom Tov they couldn’t cook up a *shtickel* cheese cake?! Why didn’t they make something?! The *teretz* is, because the *oneg* of Shabbos is כולו לה. It says וקראת לשבת עונג לקדוש ה' מכבד. The whole idea of being *me'aneig* the Shabbos is to be *mechabed Hashem*.

The Seforno himself says this on *passuk* ויום השביעי שבת לה' אלוך (Shemos 20:10).⁵ He says Hashem gave us Shabbos להתענג. And then he asks the *shaaleh*. What *shayches* does eating a good cholent have with *avodas Hashem*? He says כענין – like we find that the gemara in *Yoma* (76b) says חמרא וריחני פקחין – the gemara says that wine and good food help a person open up his mind. Did you know that? We find the concept by Yaakov Avinu. He wanted to give a *brachah* to his children. Do you know what he said? “Bring me some *maadanim*, bring me some good food, בעבור תברך נפשי, so that my soul shall bless you.” (Now, by us, it puts us to sleep; if it makes us full, and we become tired.) We have to understand that the whole purpose of an *oneg Shabbos* is for *avodas Hashem*. The idea is שבת לה' אלוך. That is the whole concept of Shabbos. And the Seforno himself says, that’s why the *passuk* says אלה הם מועדי – Hashem says, “They are My *moadim*.” And that’s the meaning of מקראי קודש – they are holy times of meeting with Hakodosh Boruch Hu. That is what he says.

He says (Vayikra 23:2), on Yom Tov it’s חצי לה' וחצי לכם, it’s not כולו לה'. That’s the concept of Yom Tov. That’s why on Yom Tov there are people who take bigger naps than they take on Shabbos. However, you have to know, he says, the whole idea of a *mo'ed*, is a meeting. And he says these *mo'adim* are מקראי קודש. What does that mean? He says פירוש: אסיפת עם לעסקי קודש. He says מקרא means “gathering.” That’s what מקרא means. It doesn’t mean “calling.” It means gathering. So מקרא קודש is a holy gathering of people. What we are doing right now is having a holy gathering of people for the purpose of עסקי קודש. This is a מקרא קודש.

BRINGING THE ONEG TO ITS TACHLIS

On Shabbos, when a person goes to *davening* – he should have this in mind. When you come to the *sedarim* on Shabbos, you should have this in mind: I’m coming to be part of a מקרא קודש.

It’s an *asifas kodesh* – the learning on Shabbos is not the same learning as during the rest of the week. The *davening* on Shabbos is different than the *davening* of the rest of the week. The eating on Shabbos is different than the eating of the weekdays. Eating during the week is just a *heiche timtze*, a means to have *kochos* to go *veiter*. On Shabbos, it’s to be *me'aneig* the Shabbos. A person has to put that in his mind.

THE MOADIM THAT HASHEM LIKES

And Hashem says מועדיכם שנהא נפשי – these are the *moadim* that I favor. But Hashem says: If you don’t call them מקראי קודש they’re going to be מקראי חול. That means if you’re going to get together to drink, to get buzzed, that’s not מועדי השם. In my days, they didn’t do such things, the *bachurim* weren’t so advanced yet, but Friday night was famous for major bull sessions. That was, like, the time when you got together *chevra* – sometimes you brought some snacks, or you didn’t need some snacks. And that was the time for the best *lashon hora* and the best...whatever it was. The Seforno (ibid, 23:2) says if it’s just שעה בחיי ועסק בחיי if people are just involving themselves in the בלבד בני אדם תענוגות, then Hashem says: Those *moadim* are not My *moadim*. You know what they are called? מועדיכם – your *moadim*.

The *passuk* in *Isaiah* says (1:14): מועדיכם שנאה נפשי, Hashem says: I hate your *moed*. That’s what it says. מועדיכם – you *moadim*, Hashem says, שנאה נפשי. That’s a very strong language. Hashem doesn’t say, I’m not pleased with them, Hashem says שנאה נפשי – I hate, My essence hates you *moadim*. My *nefesh* hates, Hashem says.

So therefore, we must get this into our *kishkes*. We want to become real *Shomrei Shabbos*. We want to do *teshuvah* for not being *shomer Shabbos* in the past. We want to keep this in our minds. If you don’t understand it, learn more about it.

SHABBOS AS A GIFT

You should know that it says in Parshas Beshalach (Shemos 16:29): ראו כי ה' נתן לכם השבת, “see that Hashem gave you Shabbos” as a *matanah tovah*. This is a tremendous *matanah*. It’s a gift. You think it’s not a gift? It’s a tremendous gift. Now, what is the *pshat* over here? First, Hashem tells me it’s מועדי, it sounds like it’s an *avodah* for Hashem. On the other hand, it seems like it’s *farkert*, that Hashem is giving us a *matanah*. There is a famous gemara we always say over. The gemara says: ראו – see with your eyes Hashem says, כי ה' נתן לכם את השבת, *Shabbos* is a *matanah*. Take a look in the Seforno over there, he says.⁶ Contemplate – ראו means contemplate – היא מתנה שלא נתנה לזולתכם. כי ה' נתן לכם השבת ואין זו מצוה בלבד אבל היא מתנה שלא נתנה לזולתכם. So we have to understand – where is the *matanah* in this? If my whole purpose is to get together with Hashem and serve Hashem, where is the *matanah*? This is what we’re going to discuss next week, *im yirtzeh Hashem*.

⁵ שבת לה' אלהיך. כלו לה' ללמוד וללמד לשמור ולעשות ולהתענג בו ד' העבודה לכבודו יתברך, כענין חמרא וריחני פקחוני (הוריות פרק כהן משיח).
⁶ כי ה' נתן לכם השבת. ואין זו מצוה בלבד אבל היא מתנה שלא נתנה לזולתם כאמרם ז"ל (שם פרק יציאות השבת) מתנה טובה יש לי בבית גזי ושבת שמה ואני מבקש ליתנה לישראל וכן סדרו בתפלה ולא נתתו לגויי הארצות וכו' ערלים, כאמרו ושומר בני ישראל את השבת, לעשות את השבת לדורותם והוא ששיגו יום שכלו שבת.

HOW TO CONNECT TO HASHEM ON SHABBOS

For this week, the *avodah* should be as follows: Let us try to remind ourselves and rethink our priorities. For those of us who used to sleep away our Shabbasos, think – can't I sleep before Shabbos? Why do you have to sleep on Shabbos afternoon? Can't you sleep after Shabbos? Let me tell you about sleeping on *motzoei Shabbos*. It took me many years to discover this, but it's a great sleep when you sleep on *motzoei Shabbos*. The problem is you don't sleep well on *motzoei Shabbos* because you sleep so long on Shabbos, so we often have a bad night on *motzoei Shabbos*. And we have the *goyishe* world that has an effect on us. My *Zeide* used to always say that the *goyishe* world has a tremendous effect on us. Therefore, what we have to do is we have to start to think of Hashem and be *mekabel* that this Shabbos is going to be Your מועד, Your Shabbos.

And when you sit by your *seudah*, be *mechazek* yourself that you are celebrating the Shabbos of Hashem. It doesn't mean you shouldn't enjoy yourself. My *Zeide* used to always say that he is very thankful on Shabbos, he used to say, "I'm thankful that Hashem didn't make me fast on Shabbos," because Yom Kippur and Shabbos both serve the same purpose. But on Yom Kippur Hashem said: I want you to connect with Me by fasting. So you stand in *shul*, you stand there for twenty five hours, or many hours of the day, and you fast. But on Shabbos, Hashem said: I'm going to let you connect with Me in an easier way, in a much

more enjoyable way - sitting by a Shabbos *seudah* and enjoying *maadanim* and all kinds of delicacies. That's definitely a much bigger *chessed*. But if you don't connect to Hashem, you're missing the point.

Let us connect with Hashem with these things. Let's think of the *chassadim* of Hashem, let's remember to give *hodaah* to Hashem for the fact that we started the *zman* again, for the wonderful *bein hazmanim*, for those of you who were able to maintain yourselves above a certain line and you didn't fall - thank Hakadosh Baruch Hu from the bottom of your heart, what a *chessed* it is that Hashem has given you. And for those of you who weren't able to maintain yourselves, say, "*Hakodosh Boruch Hu*, I wasn't able to, but I'm looking forward to this Shabbos to maintain myself and start a new beginning. I want to have a new start, a new *haschalah*."

So, *im yirtzeh Hashem*, we will be *zocheh* to have a wonderful Shabbos. You have to remember to learn as much as you can and try to minimize your עסקי חול. Minimize your עסקי חול, even if you have to take a snack on Shabbos. *Baruch Hashem*, I see people brought snacks. It's a *gevaldige zach*, a *chessed* - make a *brachah* a little better on Shabbos, make a *brachah* a drop better on Shabbos. Think of Hakadosh Boruch Hu, a drop more. Say, "*Hakodosh Boruch Hu*, I'm celebrating Your Shabbos." Not through having a snack, but by thinking about Hakadosh Boruch Hu when you're having that snack. Don't just think about your own stomach and your own self when you have that snack.

And whatever you do - talking to your wife, spending time with your wife, thank Hakadosh Boruch Hu, 'I thank you I have a wife.' Thank Hakadosh Boruch Hu immensely that you have a wife - you have to thank Hakadosh Baruch Hu from the bottom of your heart. And also if you have a family, thank Hakadosh Baruch Hu. You have to thank and to think of Hakadosh Boruch Hu all the time on Shabbos.

And if you'll do that, you'll be *zoche* to *hashraas haShechina* in the most tremendous fashion, much more than on Yom Kippur. And you'll be *zocheh* to have a tremendous week as a result. And then, we'll be bringing a *nachas ruach* to Hashem, because we're doing the *ratzon* of Hakadosh Boruch Hu.

Have a good Shabbos

IN CONCLUSION

Part 1: If counting the *Omer* is intended as a way to calculate when Shavuot will be, it would be enough for the *beis din* to count it. Instead, every person must count. Why is that? By understanding the *mitzvah* of *Sefiras Haomer* as a *klal*, with the *yesod* of the *Gra*, we understand that we must always count our days and use them to gather *chachmah*, with the most real *chachmah* being *yiras Hashem*. In Slabodka, they explained that *yirah* (fear) is related to *liros* (seeing) and that *yiras Hashem* therefore means seeing or having an awareness of Hashem in our lives. This reveals the obligation to be aware of Hashem and make sure to do His *ratzon* in every time period of our lives. Counting our days in the *Omer* means putting value into every day. We should be aware that we are learning the Torah which Hashem is teaching us, and that we can feel connected to the *ratzon* of Hashem when we do *mitzvos* and when we are *davening*, and behave with a real awareness that Hashem told us to do a *mitzvah* or not do an *aveirah*. This week, I will (*bli neder*) endeavor to keep to my schedule so as to maximize the potential of my day, and I will try to identify and highlight the *mitzvos* in the activities I do.

Part 2: The Seforno explains the purpose of Shabbos as a *mo'ed* is that Hashem wants us to use it as a *mikra kodesh*. A *mo'ed* is a meeting place, and a *mikra* is a gathering. On Shabbos we should gather together and meet with Hashem. In order to be *kulo laShem*, we cease our everyday activities. Then we are free to be fully occupied with Torah and *iskei kodesh* - *lilmod ul'lamed, lishmor v'laasos*. We are also required to have *oneg* on Shabbos. We enjoy good wine and good food for the sake of opening up our minds; we use it for *avodas Hashem*. אלה הם מועדי - We have to make sure that our Shabbasos are Shabbasos that are for Hashem, and use them as holy times of meeting with Hakadosh Boruch Hu. This week, I will (*bli neder*) reduce or reschedule my sleep on Shabbos, allowing me more time to connect meaningfully with Hashem Yisbarach, and when I am eating my *seudos*, I will think about Hashem, and thank him for all that He gives me.