

Kehillah #19



THE PERTINENT PARASHA

A Count of National Growth

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Just as Shemini Atzeret represents the culmination of Sukkos, so Shavuos (which the Sages likewise term Atzeres) is the destiny that our Pesach redemption needs to reach. Getting there requires a process.

Sefer Ha'Chinuch (Mitzvah 306), alongside other Rishonim, famously explains that we count the Omer towards the great and sacred day of Shavous, the time of *Matan Torah*:

"counting demonstrates a person's hopes of deliverance and desire to reach that time. That is why we count the Omer up, saying, "so many days have passed from the count," and we do not count "so many days remain for us to count," because this indicates our great desire to reach Shavous."

Yet, the question raised by *Sefer Ha'Chinuch* – why do we count up rather than count down – highlights the difficulty latent in the interpretation. Unlike all other festivals, Shavous does not fall on any given date. *There is no date for the festival of Shavous*. Rather, the festival occurs fifty

days after the morrow of Pesach (Vayikra 23:16), and its date used to fluctuate from year to year, depending on whether the months of Nissan and Iyar had twenty-nine or thirty days.

A countdown of fifty days to Shavous is thus *impossible*. The count does not to a given date, but is rather constitutive. Absent the count, Shavous would not exist. This is why some opinions maintain that aside from our personal count of the Omer, the Beis Din Ha-Gadol had its own Omer count (*Sifri*, Devarim 136) – a national count by the body responsible for establishing the Jewish calendar.

Moreover, the Torah itself never mentions that Shavous commemorates the event of *Matan Torah*. This dimension of Shavous is clarified by the Sages and is the central theme of our celebration: "the time of the giving of our Torah." Yet, since the pesukim themselves do not mention this aspect of the day, it is difficult to assume that the count's sole purpose is to express our anticipation of *Matan Torah*.

This, perhaps, is the reason why commen-





THE PERTINENT PARASHA



commentaries (such as the *Ohr Ha'Chaim*, Vayikra 23:15) introduce another element to the *Sefira*: not just anticipation of receiving the Torah, but a process of growth that takes us from Pesach to Shavuos, from a barley offering (defined by the Talmud, *Sotah* 14a, as animal food) to a wheat offering representing human elevation. Shavuos represents the culmination of Pesach, and reaching it requires a process of growth, taking place over a count of days.

We were born on Pesach. The pasuk describes the event as a literal birth of a newborn infant, still unable to fend for himself and totally reliant on Hashem's kindness (*Yechezkel* 16:4). At this early stage we were still unready to take responsibility and discharge the duties latent in our relationship with Hashem. Achieving this level would take fifty days – fifty days of development culminating in Shavuos.

The Ramban thus teaches that Shavuos is to Pesach as Shemini Atzeres is to Sukkos. Just as Shemini Atzeret represents the culmination of Sukkos, so Shavuos (which the Sages likewise term Atzeres) is the destiny that our Pesach redemption needs to reach. Getting there requires a process. Unlike Shemini Atzeres, it cannot be juxtaposed to Pesach, but only arrives fifty days later. We are thus readied for the bread offering of Shavuos and for accepting the responsibility of Torah.

Many Torah commentaries point out the

As the share of observant Jews in Israel continues to swell, our duty in this context becomes ever clearer: to take our part in bringing Israel to its own Shavuos, its own acceptance of the Torah.

growth element of the *Sefira*. But while most dwell on the personal development of the Omer count, it is noteworthy that the count leading from Pesach to Shavuos is *national*. Our birth from Egypt was national rather than personal, and the process of development is likewise national. By Shavuos, we need to reach the national maturity required to receive the Torah.

Perhaps it is not by chance that Yom Haatzmaut, Israel's independence day, is celebrated annually during the Omer Period. Israel's miraculous birth brought into existence a Jewish State still lacking in maturity. It has grown and consolidated, but much of its development, becoming ready for the tremendous responsibility of representing the Jewish People, remains ahead.


As the share of observant Jews in Israel continues to swell, our duty in this context becomes ever clearer: to take our part in bringing Israel to its own Shavuos, its own acceptance of the Torah. As we proceed through the Omer time during a period of social turbulence, the message is one we should internalize.



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HASHKAFICALLY SPEAKING

Sefiras HaOmer and Unlocking Spiritual Potential

by Rabbi Shaya Karlinsky | Dean/Rosh Yeshiva of David Shapell College /Yeshiva Darche Noam and Midreshet Rachel v'Chaya College

Marital harmony is usually disrupted when spouses fail to appreciate the hidden potential of each other, focusing only on superficial observations.

The coming week of Sefiras HaOmer is the week of **טוה**, which implies a glory that is hidden below the surface and is the middah of Aharon HaCohen. During this week we find both Pesach Sheni and Lag B'omer, the day the plague that killed the students of Rebbe Akiva ceased, as well as the yahrzeit of Rebbe Shimon bar Yochai, an event that attracts Jews of every stripe to his grave site. What are the connections?

The Midrash (Vayikrah Rabbah 28:6) admonishes us, "The mitzvah of the omer should not be taken lightly," for in the merit of the omer sacrifice Avraham merited inheritance of Eretz Yisrael and Hashem brings harmony between husband and wife." What would cause us to take it more lightly than any other mitzvah, requiring such a warning?

Meal offerings in the Temple were brought from wheat, which is the highest level of grain. The omer sacrifice was brought from barley, which is considered animal fodder and the lowest level of grain. As such one could easily relegate it

to a lower level than other sacrifices. The mistake is looking only at the surface and not seeing the spiritual potential that lies hidden away.

This is its connection with Eretz Yisrael, which seems like any other physical land yet has spiritual potential hidden below the surface. And marital harmony is usually disrupted when spouses fail to appreciate the hidden potential of each other, focusing only on superficial observations. The omer sacrifice is a lesson in looking below the surface and identifying hidden potential.

The holiday of Pesach Sheni came about in a strange way (Bamidbar 9: 1-14). A group of people were ritually impure and unable to bring the commanded Pesach sacrifice. Their complaint: "Why should we be deprived?" But they answered their own question. They were ritually impure and exempt from the Pesach sacrifice!

They were exempt, but the spiritual potential hidden away in the Korban Pesach would be lost to them. That would be true deprivation. This realization required them to see below the surface. This is not to imply a commandment from which they were exempt but a commandment with spiritual potential that would be lost.

When the Gemara (Yevamos 62b) re-



counts the death of Rebbe Akiva's 24,000 students, it faults them for not behaving with proper respect for each other. This is particularly difficult to understand, as they all learned in the same yeshiva, apparently aligned in their dress and philosophy. What was missing?

Rebbe Akiva's students gave significance only to the perceived greatness of each other, missing the much greater significance that was not apparent.

The root of the word כבוד, honor, is כבד, which literally means heavy but implies significance and gravitas. We give honor to those whom we consider to have what we view as significant. It can be money, fame, Torah wisdom or physical ability. But the true significance of every person is his or her unique neshama, the tzelem Elokim. (*Pirkei Avos* 4:1) Rebbe Akiva's students gave significance only to the perceived greatness of each other, missing the much greater significance that was not apparent. This was a breach of the omer period.

Reversal of Superficial Perceptions

Rebbe Shimon bar Yochai represented the reversal of superficial perceptions. The Gemara (*Shabbos* 33b) tells that when the Romans were pursuing him and his son, Rebbe Eliezer, they hid in a cave for twelve years, apparently involved in non-

stop Torah study. When they were allowed to leave, they saw farmers plowing and planting, and their reaction was, "They are abandoning activities that are eternal (Torah study) to involve themselves in temporal activities (agriculture)!"

Wherever glanced was immediately consumed by fire. A heavenly voice boomed, "Did you leave the cave to destroy my world? Go back in!" They returned for an additional twelve months. When they left the cave, everywhere that Rebbe Eliezer would crush (with his glance) Rebbe Shimon would fix.

What problem existed when they left the cave the first time? They were on such a high spiritual level that they couldn't imagine anyone being involved in anything but spiritual activities. They were consumed by looking critically at everything.

How did an additional year fix that problem? Apparently, Rebbe Shimon was able to rise to an even higher level and see the spiritual potential hidden away in the agricultural activities of the simple Jew. His love for every Jew, seeing Divine potential hidden below the surface, was his unique quality. It is what has made him uniquely loved by every type of Jew.

The middah of the 33rd day of the omer is הוד שבהוד, the culmination of unlocking spiritual potential always lurking below the surface.



PARASHA HALACHA FOR THE SHABBOS TABLE

Counting the Omer – With a Bracha...or Without

Josh and Tammy Kruger

The Story

It was Friday night, and the Feldman family was sitting at their table enjoying their Shabbos meal. Everyone was appreciative that Mr. Feldman had been able to finish work early on Friday, and the family was able to start an early Shabbos. This meant that little Chavi, who had just turned five, had managed to stay awake during the meal and participate in all her favorite zemiros. But it was now dark outside, and she was beginning to yawn.

"Looks like it's time for you to lie down in your bed," said Mr. Feldman. Suddenly, he remembered "The Omer! We did not count in shul, because we made early Shabbos, and we should count now that it is night. If only I could remember what number to count!" "That's easy!" said Yosef. "It's sixteen, just like my age."

A look of concern appeared on Mr. Feldman's face. "Thank you for helping Yosef, but I think you now have a problem. You have just performed the count for tonight. One should respond with the previous night's number. I believe you have just lost your opportunity to make a bracha.

"Actually, Honey," said Mrs. Feldman. "I just attended a shiur on this topic this week, and there are some important issues to point out."

The Discussion

Q: What is the connection between our story and the parasha?

A: The mitzvah of counting the omer is found in Parashas Emor (Vayikra 23:15).

Q: Has Yosef lost his opportunity to say sefiras haomer with a bracha?

A: No. There are two reasons:

1) Yosef did not say the words "today is", he just said "it's sixteen." In order to perform the mitzvah of counting, a person must start with the words "Today is ..." (*Mishnah Berura*, 489:20).

2) When we count, we not only note the number of days but also the number of weeks. The Eliya Raba ruled that if someone left out the number of weeks, then it is assumed that they intended not to fulfill the mitzvah. They are therefore considered not to have performed the mitzvah and should proceed to count normally with a bracha. (*Sha'ar Hatzion*, 489:28).

Q: What if the story had occurred on the fifth day of the Omer, and he said "Today is the fifth day?" Would Yosef have lost out on the mitzvah?

A: In this situation, there are no weeks to be counted yet. Therefore, Yosef is considered to have completed the mitzvah. The only downside is that he has lost the opportunity to make a bracha. This is because a bracha is made before a mitzvah is done, not after. This means that when the next night comes he counts just as everyone else – with a bracha (*Mishna Berura*, 489:22).



Paying the Price of Injuring and Cursing

by Rabbi Asher Meir | Torah and Policy Researcher

Immediately after specifying the judgment of the mekalel (blasphemer) of our parasha, the Torah sets out the general law of blaspheming: "Any man who blasphemes his G-d shall bear his sin." Then we find a series of seemingly unrelated judgments; they seem to just repeat laws that were already taught in their natural place, Parashas Mishpatim.

The first is murder: "And any man who kills any human being shall surely be put to death." Then, assault: "And if a man maims his fellow: as he has done, so shall it be done to him; fracture for fracture, eye for eye, tooth for tooth." Subsequently, the Torah juxtaposes the law of injuring a person with that of injuring an animal: "And one who kills a beast

an animal, which is restitution for the loss of property, with that for killing a human being, which is the death penalty. Yet, the context of the preceding verse is not killing but assault, and we certainly don't execute the injurer. Indeed, the Talmud (Bava Kamma 83b) provides extensive proof that we don't even impose bodily punishment on him; the expression "an eye for an eye" refers to paying monetary compensation only.

It's true that in both cases - injuring an animal and injuring a person - the injurer pays compensation. However, the verse hints at a significant difference between the two types of injuries. The payment for injuring an animal is simply compensation for the loss of property, and as the Talmud (Bava Kamma 10b) says, "Do not read 'yeshalmenah' (he shall pay for it) but rather 'yashlimenah' (he shall complete it). He must complete and fill the deficiency."

Payment for Injuring a Person

Contrastingly, the payment for injuring a person is a punishment that is a kind of scaled-down death penalty. The verse says "And one who strikes a person shall be put to

The expression "an eye for an eye" refers to paying monetary compensation only.

shall make restitution for it, but one who kills a human being shall be put to death."

The latter verse seemingly contrasts the punishment for killing



MEKOM AVODA

Workplace Ethics & Halacha



death," but the Talmud (*Bava Kamma* 83b) explains, he is "put to death by monetary means." The payment is a form of punishment for the serious offense of hitting another person to the point of causing injury.

The damage payments of the assailant (*chovel*) are well understood as a type of punishment not only in the realm of *drasha* but also in that of *halacha*. Here are

The unique severity of hitting and cursing one's parents is rooted in the fact that since they were partners with Hashem in his creation, their honor is equated with His.

several sources inclining to this view. (The sources were mainly collected from the Acharonim, including: *Chiddushei Rav Chaim HaLevi*, *Toen veNitan* 5b; *Ohr Sameach* there; *Kuntresei Shiurim* of Rav Gustman, chapter 21; *Shiurei Rav Shmuel (Rozovsky) Bava Metzia*, part 1, page 66).

- The Gemara (*Bava Kamma* 83b) shows at length that the expression "an eye for an eye" is not understood literally as bodily punishment; rather it defines the extent of monetary

compensation. One source is the verse "You shall not accept ransom for the life of a murderer who is guilty of death" (*Bamidbar* 35:31), which implies that the monetary compensation for mere assault is a type of ransom that comes to replace corporal punishment.

- A bull which gores a person is liable only for the direct damage caused, like a bull that damages another bull. The owner is exempt from three of the five kinds of payments that a human attacker is liable for in the same circumstances (*Bava Kamma* 33a). Although a person is usually liable for all monetary damages caused by his animal, we can explain that here the owner is exempt because the payment is not regular monetary damages but rather a kind of punishment for the offense of assault.

- A braisa (*Bava Kamma* 84a) states: "Rabbi Eliezer says, an eye for an eye - literally." The gemara explains that even Rabbi Eliezer did not mean that the assailant should have his eyes gouged out. Rather, the amount of payment is not determined by the value of the victim's eye but by the value of the assailant's eye - a payment with no inherent



connection to the loss suffered by the victim. Therefore, it is quite clear that, at least according to Rabbi Eliezer, we are dealing with punishment, not compensation.

- In his commentary on the Mishnah (*Bava Kamma* 8:1), Maimonides calls the payment made by an assailant to his victim as a *kenassa*, or fine – punishment, not compensation. Rabbi Gustman concludes that "The Rambam means that this is not a debt that one incurs [by mere admission], but rather it is in the category of a punishment that one is not liable for except according to witnesses."

Cursing Is Likened to Striking

Returning now to *drasha*, the unique severity of injuring another person is evident not only through its unique judgments but also from the seeming out-of-context placement of these judgments in the midst of

the *mekalel* narrative. In *Parashas Mishpatim*, cursing is likened to striking: the Torah warns (*Shemos* 21:15) that "whoever strikes his father or his mother shall be put to death." Immediately afterwards, verse 17 states, "whoever curses his father or his mother shall be put to death."

The unique severity of cursing, or blasphemy, is due to the terrible disrespect shown to the Creator of the world. Similarly, the unique severity of hitting and cursing one's parents is rooted in the fact that since they were partners with Hashem in his creation, their honor is equated with His. (*Sifra Kedoshim*, 1 6-7.) The laws of the *chovel* are a natural continuation: The placement and content of these halachos both serve to emphasize that any harm to a human being is a form of disrespect towards the Divine image within him or her, akin to blasphemy on a smaller scale.

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Living as a Kiddush Hashem at Work

Rabbi Tzvi Broker | Career Coach and Director of Pilzno Work Inspired

Parshas Emor contains a mitzvah that has become strongly associated with our behavior in the workplace: making a Kiddush Hashem. The Rambam (Yesodei Torah 5:11), based on the Gemara in Yoma 86a, discusses the parameters of this mitzvah:

When a chacham is careful with his behavior, he speaks pleasantly with others, his social interactions are attractive to others, he receives them pleasantly, he can be insulted by others but does not insult them in return, he honors them even though they disrespect him, he does business faithfully... to the extent that all praise him, love him, and aspire to his actions – such a person sanctifies Hashem's name. The verse (Yeshaya 49:3): "And He said to me: 'Israel, you are My servant, in whom I will be glorified'" refers to him..

This powerful source teaches that living as a Kiddush Hashem is not just about being honest in our business dealings. The behaviors listed are aligned with some of the most important soft skills in today's workplace, such as communication and social skills, emotional intelligence, and empathy. The mitzvah of Kiddush Hashem includes becoming an inspirational leader who people look up to in the workplace.



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PARASHA AND PARNASSAH



One of the core soft skills at work today is also referenced in the parasha's discussion of the Korban Todah. The Korban Todah's core theme is hakaras hatov, feeling and showing appreciation.

The Jewish people are called Yehudim to highlight that hodaah – giving thanks and showing appreciation – are integral parts of our spiritual DNA.

Workplace researchers have proven that showing appreciation to employees leads to increased employee engagement and productivity. This has resulted in HR strategies that focus on employee recognition, holiday gifts or bonuses. Similarly, business researchers have revealed that showing appreciation to clients creates more brand loyalty and increases customer retention. This has resulted in sales and customer support strategies that include thank you notes, rewards and perks. Yet, in the Torah worldview, showing appreciation is not merely a winning strategy; it's a way of living.

The Chiddushei HaRim highlights that the Jewish people are called Yehudim to highlight that hodaah – giving thanks and showing appreciation – are integral parts of our spiritual DNA.

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Our Spouses, Our Kids

Rebbetzin Ilana Cowland

Relationships coach and author of *The Moderately Anxious Everybody*.

We're all so busy nowadays. It's a fascinating thing. I'm sure if you'd have told a woman two hundred years ago (and yes, I'm generalizing when I say "woman"; but there was no feminist movement yet, so generalizing was still allowed) that her great granddaughter would have a machine to wash clothes, a machine to dry clothes and ready-made meals delivered to her door, she would have responded,

"But darling, what's she going to do all day?"

Yet here we are, and we're somehow busier than we've ever been!

So it's understandable that on our long list of things to do, which may include pressing the buttons of said machines, we sometimes confuse our spouse for our children. Not in how we address them, but in how we relate to them. Our list might read:

- Pick up shirts - Mendy
- Make sandwiches - Zeevy
- Buy birthday gift - Shmuli

We could understand that a stranger would not know which of those names

belongs to the husband and which to the sons. Nothing wrong with that, per se, but it becomes troubling when our attitudes are indiscernible.



In how many areas of our life does the language we assign to our spouse differ from or exactly match the language we assign to our children?



A Great Litmus Test

We are busy. Yes. We have lots of responsibilities. Indeed. But do we think of our spouses and our children in the same light? If so, it's time to slow things down. A great litmus test for this is how we have constructive, critical conversations. If we tell off our husbands or our wives like we tell off our children, we need to consider whether or not we're failing to differentiate between the two.

It's not because we think that they fall into the same category. More likely, it's because we have become so overwhelmed with our lives that we've efficiently, but mistakenly, lumped our responsibilities into one package.



The distinction between types of criticism is so beautifully termed in the Torah. Is this a *hochiach tochiach* (you shall surely give reproof) kind of relationship? Is it my job to tell you off because I'm someone whom you determine has the credits to do so? Like, for example, your (loving and respected) parent?

Or is this a *lo tisna* (you shall not hate a person in your heart) kind of conversation whereby I'm telling you that I'm frustrated because the idea of my silence causing a rift in our connection is untenable? Like, for example, if we are married?

And what about time-spending? Am I spending time with you because it's advisable for our long-term relationship or because you're my best friend and I can't get enough of you?

And what about buying you things? Am I doing so because you have needs, and I'm responsible to meet those needs? Or does it make me happy to let you know how much I appreciate you? The reason I buy things for my spouse should be different than why

I do so for my kids.

In how many areas of our life does the language we assign to our spouse differ from or exactly match the language we assign to our children? If we find that the answers are the same in too many areas, we can be forgiven. But we also may need to consider slowing things down enough in our lives to be able to manage separating out our feelings towards our spouse and kids.

These feelings need not compete, but they also deserve to be distinguished one from the other. Identify areas of your relationships where you interact with both your spouse and your kids, and put it to the "exact match" test. How can you word your reasons for doing what you do so that they reflect a different type of relationship. Shift out of the exact match patterns by rewording your answers.

Hopefully, we will find that when our very language reflects the unique roles that each of our relationships plays in our life, it will help us view the people in our lives correctly, with a goal to help each of them feel how special they are to us.



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STORIES THAT INSPIRE

Two Lag Ba'Omer Stories of Ahavas Yisrael

Rabbi Shmuel Kimche | Mashgiach Ruachni at Netzach Yisrael Elementary School, RBS.

Lag B'Omer always creeps up on me. Every year, I am struck by Rabbi Akiva, the great master of Torah Shebe'alpeh. Lag Ba'omer is a day on which we celebrate his Torah. On the one hand, his disciples stopped dying, and he was able to establish his Torah through his five great talmidim. On the other, a great part of his Torah, the Torah of Rabbi Shimon bar Yochai, was revealed to the world.

Two of Rabbi Akiva's messages stand out for me. One of them is *ve'ahavta le'reacha kamocha*, love of our fellows, which Rabbi Akiva stated is a "great principle of Torah." The second is Rabbi Akiva's desire to die out of love for Hashem, a death of Kiddush Hashem. The Maharal describes how the former leads to the latter – love for our fellow man brings us love for Hashem. Here are two stories describing how natural our love for each other is and how inspires me to connect to HKBH.

The Train Experience

Februray 2016. Danni Denino, a 19-year-old girl, is sitting on the train from Lod to Beersheva when a young lady in soldier's uniform boards the train. This soldier is speaking on her phone to the IEC – the notorious acronym for the Israel Electric Company and well known to any of us who has to pay the electricity bill. "You don't understand," she was explaining. "I will never be able to pay that amount! I live alone with my mother, and all I get is a

soldier's salary."

All the passengers were silent, all except this young lady, who was trying (without success) to keep her voice from cracking. Danni couldn't help eavesdropping, and her heart went out to this poor young idealistic soldier, who was pleading, "Please don't disconnect us. It's mid-winter, and my mother will not be able to manage without heating."

Out of the corner of her eye, she noticed a middle-aged man get up from his seat and make his way towards the young lady. Ofir Yitzchak walked over, removed the phone from her shaking hand, and asked simply, "How much do we owe?"

To the surprise of all the turning heads, Ofir simply started reading off his credit card number and paid the 1,950 shekel owed by this girl. Too shocked to say anything, the soldier simply nodded as she heard the words from the operator, "Well that's it, the card has gone through, I am happy to say. Have a good day."

No one on that commuter train will forget the lesson taught by Ofir – particularly Danni Denino, who took a picture of Ofir and posted the story online. Danni decided that day to start a chesed organization. After describing the story, she posted, "I got off the train with hope and faith in people. There are still



those who do things for others without expecting anything in return. I was left with my mouth hanging open, speechless, and full of a sense of pride in being a part of this nation that galvanizes to help others during times of distress. Friends, share this post so that it reaches people who know this amazing guy so they can be filled with pride as well.”

Astounding. I am pretty convinced that such stories don't happen on the London Underground or the New York subway. The fiber strands of one cloth are forever intertwined. “Who is as you, one nation upon the earth!”

A Grocery Store Power Outage

Around 8am on Friday morning two weeks ago, the Yochananof store in Ramat Hasharon was teeming with shoppers. Around one hundred shoppers were still in the store, carts brimming to the top.

Suddenly, all the lights went out. A power cut. Commotion. The last thunderstorm of the winter had ferociously attacked the power lines and succeeded in downing the power. Everything was down, including the payment points and credit card machines. Everything ground to a halt.

The supermarket manager had to make a quick decision. Seeing people with the Shabbos food in their shopping carts, Tzvi Abraham had to do something. The announcement was not long coming: “Ladies and Gentlemen, as you can see, the power is out. We know that you need

this food for Shabbat. Please write a list of what you have taken, and come back next week to settle your bill. Am Yisrael Achim.”

Almost 100 customers left with full carts, and through the stormy weather made it home for Shabbos with their provisions.

On Sunday, 70% of the shoppers came back to pay. The rest came over the next two days. The manager could not actually believe it. Customers had come back with lists they had prepared and photos they had taken of the barcodes.

More than 135,000 shekel of groceries had been taken on Friday – and it had all been paid up by Tuesday. Yochananof of Ramat HaSharon did not lose a penny.

Am Yisrael Achim, indeed. But can you imagine the tremendous Kiddush Hashem here? I don't believe that Walmart in NYC or Tesco in London would have done or expected the same. The unity of the Jewish people, the special achdus we experience, is a reality of nature. For all of us, as for Rabbi Akiva, it is a stepping stone towards Ahavas Hashem. Tragically, the talmidim of Rabbi Akiva were not able to treat one another with the appropriate level of respect, and they suffered the consequence until Lag Ba'Omer. It is a day of love, love for every Jew. And love for Hashem.

May we only feel love for our Jewish brothers and sisters. Am Yisrael Achim.



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