

כרשת אמרר

גליון 30

ט"ו אייר תש"פ

מאת ר' ש. קאפלן שליט"א

The גמרא in (ס"ב:;) famously teaches, "כ"ד אלף תלמידי ר' עקיבא מתו בין פסח לעצרת," *Twenty-four-thousand students of ר' עקיבא passed away between פסח and שבועות*. Why did this happen? "כיון שלא נהגו כבוד זה לזה." *Since they were not נוהג with respect between one and another.*

Firstly, how did ר' עקיבא know that the reason for these deaths was because they did not treat each other with respect?

Secondly, ר' עקיבא writes that on ל"ג בעומר we should be "מרבים בשמחה", *increase with happiness*. ר' עקיבא quotes from ר' גאון that the reason we increase with happiness and joy on ל"ג בעומר is "דוך ארץ קדמה לתורה" because on that day the ר' עקיבא of תלמידי (above) clearly states: *'they died between פסח and שבועות;'*

how does ר' גאון write that the deaths stopped *halfway* on ל"ג בעומר? (The פננת פנעה writes, "!!"אין לנו כח לחלוק על הגמרא")

Thirdly, in this weeks סדרה the תורה teaches, "וספרתם לכם ממחרת השבת מיום הביאתכם את עמר, התנופה, *You shall count for yourselves – from the morrow of the rest day, from the day when you bring the עומר – seven weeks, they shall be complete...you shall count fifty days; and you shall offer a new meal-offering to Hashem.*" רש"י explains that the "מנחה חדשה לה'" refers to the שתי הלחם which is brought on שבועות. Meaning: the תורה is telling us to count the עומר from the day we offer up the עומר, i.e. פסח, until the day we bring the שתי הלחם, i.e. שבועות. Why couldn't the תורה just tell us simply, "count 50 days between פסח and שבועות?" Why is the תורה referring to פסח and שבועות with the קרבנות we offer up on those days?

Fourthly, after ספירת העומר some of us recite the תפילה asking רבוננו של עולם, אתה, הקב"ה "רבונו של עולם, אתה, הקב"ה... *to count the עומר in order to purify us from our טומאותינו* and קליפותינו. We count the עומר to purify

ourselves. Now, the תפילה doesn't end there. The תפילה continues to bring a source in the תורה which elucidates that the reason we count the עומר is to purify ourselves. What is the פסוק? "וספרתם לכם ממחרת השבת מיום הביאכם את עמר התנופה, שבע שבתות תמימות תהיינה." "פסוק", *You shall count for yourselves – from the morrow of the rest day, from the day when you bring the עומר – seven weeks, they shall be complete.* How exactly do we see in this פסוק that ספירת העומר is there to purify ourselves?

Fifthly, ר' עמרם גאון instituted that between פסח and סוכות after שבת מנחה we should say פרקי אבות. In fact, the אבודרהם and the רמע מפאנו write that we should say פרקי אבות only between פסח and שבועות? Why specially now between פסח and שבועות did they find it appropriate to say פרקי אבות?

The משנה in פרקי אבות teaches, (פרק ג', משנה י"ז), *If there is no דרך ארץ אין דרך ארץ אין תורה* (פרק ג', משנה י"ז), *there is no תורה*. תורה רבינו יונה explains: A person must constantly work on his מידות. Only once a person works on his מידות will the רבש"ע allow His תורה to reside in him, *for He does not reside in a גוף which is not a person of (טובות) מדות*.

If we want to shteig in learning תורה, if we want to grow in התורה and if we want to receive ס"ד in התורה we must work on our מדות: "דרך ארץ קדמה לתורה": מדות.

"דרך ארץ is not just a "סדר". "דרך ארץ קדמה לתורה", would say, "ג' ר' שמואל ראזאוסקי זצ"ל means: It's not to reach or achieve great heights in התורה without ל"ל or טובות דרך ארץ."

We look in the history of כלל ישראל and we see the same theme which stands out within our דור; they all are extremely cautious and careful regarding their דרך ארץ, בין דרך ארץ and מידות טובות.

One can only become a גדול בתורה if one work's on our מדות.

Of course, תורה also helps us refine, improve and develop our מידות טובות, as ר' חיים writes that to complete our מדות requires תורה. תורה in his מואלאזיין זצ"ל is the way to acquire תורה, and once we are קונה תורה the תורה gives us the power to polish and refine our מידות טובות.

ל"ל would say in the name of ג"ר ר' ש"ך זצ"ל, "It doesn't say anywhere in the תורה about having טובות מידות, because "דרך ארץ קדמה לתורה" – the טובות מידות must come before תורה."

The איש חזון writes in a letter, "If a person has within him מידות רעות it causes, **סותם**" "הלב וסוגרים דלתות חכמה", *a blockage of the heart and it closes the doors of wisdom.*

A person must understand that he will not receive success in his תורה without working on his מידות and his לחבירו. Speaking nicely to each other. Treating another with respect.

is the time of קבלת התורה. The time before שבועות is therefore obviously the time to prepare for קבלת התורה. We believe באמונה שלימה that every year on the שבועות the רבש"ע is giving each and everyone of us his השפעה of תורה.

Therefore, writes the חידושי הרי"ם: The ימי הספירה is a time to prepare ourselves with דרך "דרך - מידות" before receiving the תורה! This is the time to prepare, to work on our מידות - ארץ קדמה לתורה!"

and the אבודרהם, רמע מפאנו therefore explains: The reason why the פרקי אבות established to say פסח and שבועות is because the theme which runs through פרקי אבות is mainly one: **"מידות טובות"**!

The ברטנורה at the beginning of מסכת אבות writes, "מסכת זו שאני", *This מסכת is different*, "אינו מיוחדת למצוה מיוחדת אלא כולה מוסר ומידות.", *it is not (written) specifically for one מצוה (such as שבת or סוכה), but rather it is full of מוסר and מידות.*

Accordingly, מסכת אבות begins: "משה קבל תורה מסיני ומסרה ליהושע", *accepted משה* from סיני *and gave it over to יהושע*, so that a person shouldn't think that אבות is not from סיני and rather the חכמים established this in their hearts. NO! משה קבל מסיני - he received this as well from הקב"ה.

This is why they were מתקן to say פרקי אבות between פסח and שבועות, to help us work on our מידות.

We now understood the גאון very well. When the גמרא tells us that the תלמידים of ר' עקיבא died between פסח and שבועות, it doesn't mean that there were deaths from day 1 until day 49. But rather הם"ל are revealing "מתו בין פסח לעצרת"; meaning: they died in the תקופה

of "בין פסח לעצרת". Indeed, they stopped dying on ל"ג בעומר, however, these deaths were in a תקופה, a תקופה for מתן תורה – a תקופה of דרך ארץ.

לפי, obviously, "דרך ארץ קדמה לתורה" of תקופה, understood that if they died in a תקופה, obviously, לפי, obviously, there was some element which was lacking within their דרך ארץ – their הכנות for התורה. קבלת התורה. The גמרא is telling us, they died in a unique period of time. It was a time for דרך ארץ. However, something was lacking; "שלא נהגו כבוד זה לזה".

The מהר"ל writes: The קרבן עומר which was brought on פסח was made from שעורים, *barley*. The גמרא in סוטה teaches that the קרבן that a סוטה brings, is a קרבן made out of animal feed, i.e. שעורים. A סוטה (who acts like an animal) brings a קרבן שעורים – a קרבן made out of animal feed.

On the other hand, the שתי הלחם which was brought on שבועות was made out of flour, *human food*.

From פסח to שבועות we're on a mission. It's not just any mission: from פסח to שבועות we have to make ourselves from being animals to becoming humans!

We're building from a קרבן עומר - שעורים to a קרבן שתי הלחם! The עבודה of the ספירה is to work on ourselves and make oneself into a true human being.

With this, we can now understand the תפילה some people recite after counting the עומר.

During the עומר we want to be מטהר ourselves! Elevate ourselves! We want to remove any חלק הבהמי from within us - כדי לטהרנו מקלפותינו ומטמאותינו.

And it's more: the מקור for this is from the פסוק in the תורה which commands us to count from the day we sacrifice the **קרבן עומר – the barley – the animal food**, until the day

we offer up the **שתי הלחם – the human food!** "וספרתם לכם ממחרת השבת מיום הביאכם את

עמר התנופה, שבע שבתות תמימות תהיינה, שבע שבתות תמימות תהיינה... תספרו חמישים יום, והקרבתם

"**מנחה חדשה לה'**. *You shall count for yourselves – from the morrow of the rest day, from*

the day when you bring the עומר – seven weeks, they shall be complete...you shall count

fifty days; and you shall offer a new meal-offering to Hashem.

We count from the קרבן שעורים to the קרבן חיטים in order to purify and clean ourselves from any חלק of the animal within us! We're changing from an animal to a human being. That is what the ימי הספירה is all about: purifying ourselves.

ר' אלהנן ווסרמן זצ"ל הי"ד writes in the name of the זוהר הקדוש: When the רבש"ע created אדם, Hashem declared, "נעשה אדם לצלמנו", *let us make a person with his image*. Who was the רבש"ע speaking to?

Teaches the זוהר הקדוש: The רבש"ע spoke to the entire בריאה! The רבש"ע took every כח in the בריאה and put it together to make a person – נעשה אדם. A human being is a microcosm of the entire world – the entire universe. Every good and every bad מידה we find in the animal kingdom is included within the human being.

As its stated in איוב, "כעיר פרא, אדם יולד", and רש"י explains in (פרק ד') קהלת: "כעיר פרא: *A person is born a wild animal, "אדם יולד", a person must make himself into a human being.*

This is mainly our עבודה during the ימי הספירה.

The תלמידים of עקיבא ר' were killed during this תקופה 'between פסח and שבועות' because according to their level they were not נוהג כבוד זה לזה.

Obviously, we cannot imagine what this means לפי מדרגותיהם. The חתם סופר was once present at a אסיפת רבנים. They were discussing why the רמב"ם left out a הלכה which is גמרא in a מפורש.

One of the רבנים there exclaimed, "Nu nu, the רמב"ם... he was a human being after all...it makes much sense for a human being to miss out one הלכה..."

The חתם סופר stood up and called this person a "חמור" – a donkey.

Surprised and shocked the way the חתם סופר addressed this person, his close ones asked for an explanation.

The חתם סופר explained with a מדרש: "אם ראשונים כבני אדם, אנו כחמורים", *If the early generations are like humans, we are like donkeys*, "ואם ראשונים כמלאכי השרת אנו כבני אדם", *and if the early ones are considered heavenly angles, we are considered as humans*.

Therefore, the חתם סופר was telling this person, "If you consider the רמב"ם – someone from the early generations as a בני אדם, then you are a חמור!"

We cannot understand exactly what "שלא נהגו כבוד זה לזה" means. It's beyond our imagination.

However, we must take it as what it means to us. We must exert ourselves – especially during this תקופה to be נוהג כבוד זה לזה.

On the day of his death, the Rosh HaShana of the town of Nikolsburg left this world and returned to the world of the dead.

He was buried in the cemetery. From there they took him and buried him in the town.

When the town of Nikolsburg heard about this they were very upset, "bury him in the town where he was buried together with his father," they said.

They asked the town what to do – how to act further.

Six months later, the town wrote a letter stating that they should unbury him and rebury him in his hometown in Nikolsburg.

The town continued to write: "In fact, I was going to write this letter immediately six months ago when I was originally asked this question. However, as I was writing the letter, I fell asleep. As I was sleeping, the Rosh HaShana appeared to me in a dream and told me, "Since I broke off a wedding and caused a man to lie in the wrong place for six months as a punishment."

I therefore delayed my return until six months later," concluded the town.

In the "The History of the Town of Nikolsburg" this story is brought, and it's written there the biography about the Rosh HaShana, however, nowhere is it written that he ever broke off his wedding?

However, the "The History of the Town of Nikolsburg" brings in the name of the son of the town who said that he heard the story from his father the town, "In the dream, the Rosh HaShana told the town that he once asked someone else to break up his wedding, causing a man to lie in the wrong place."

What he did was, however, he did something which caused someone else to lie in the wrong place.

We see from the above that:

A person is punished for hurting someone else's feelings. There is no such thing as hurting someone else's feelings.

The Rosh HaShana once received a letter from a man in a distant town asking a question.

"One second," thought the Rosh HaShana, "why is he asking me this question? He has his own town in his own town!"

Without thinking much more, ר' יצחק אלהנן could already see exactly what was going on, *“Obviously the Rov of his town made a mistake in the פסק, and therefore he is coming to ask me for the true פסק, thereby embarrassing his own Rov.”*

Look how an אדם גדול handles such a situation: ר' יצחק אלהנן sent a letter with the wrong פסק (against the ש"ך), the same פסק as the Rov's.

He then went to the post office and sent a telegram (which was very expensive in those days) to this איד saying, “I just sent you a פסק in the post. However, I just realized that this פסק is not like the ש"ך. Don't go after the first פסק.”

He was so נזהר in the כבוד of another Rov! He made as if he made the same mistake himself! The איד would no longer be able to embarrass his Rov, because ר' יצחק אלהנן made the same mistake!

ר' יעקב קאמענצקי זצ"ל and ר' משה פיינשטיין זצ"ל were both returning from a חתונה. The person who offered to give them a lift, was shocked to first see ר' יעקב and ר' משה discussing and debating who should sit in the front!

Afterwards they explained: “We were not arguing who should sit in the front, we were discussing who will be going out first. We were just trying to work out who will be getting out first, because the person who is getting out first must sit in the back. If the person sitting in the front will get out first, the driver will feel like a *'taxi driver'* driving a car with an empty seat in the front and the גדול הדור sitting at the back!”

That is what it means to be נוהג כבוד זה לזה.

ראש ישיבה זצ"ל Manchester was with the Manchester בחור ר' מרדכי מוזס זצ"ל in ארץ ישראל, one year over סוכות. The ראש ישיבה asked the בחור to walk him and show him the way to Ponevzh – to visit ר' יחזקאל זצ"ל.

Immediately, the בחור walked him to Ponevzh ישיבה.

The ראש ישיבה went up the two flights of stairs to the room where ר' יחזקאל would learn. The בחור waited at the bottom of the stairs until the ראש ישיבה finished.

One minute later, the ראש ישיבה came back down the stairs and told the בחור that he was ready to leave.

The ראש ישיבה and ר' יחזקאל hadn't seen each other for many years. They had a lot to catch up on! Why was their discussion for just one minute?!

“I’m sure the ר' ראש ישיבה had lots to discuss... what took so quick?” asked the בחור.

“I’ll tell you what happened,” said the ר' ראש ישיבה, “I went into ר' יחזקאל and he immediately asked me how I got here. I told him a בחור walked me whose waiting for me downstairs.”

Said ר' יחזקאל, “The בחור surely has things to do. We can’t schmooze here and make the בחור wait! We’ll find another time to schmooze, however, we can’t keep the בחור waiting.”

Such is the way גדולי הדור thought so carefully about other people’s feelings.

At the end of this weeks פרשה, the תורה tells us about the אשה ישראלית who was מברך. They weren’t sure what to do with him, so accordingly they put him in prison.

יא teaches, they put him in prison "לבדו" – *alone*, "ולא הניחו מקושש עמו", *but they did not place him in prison together with the one who gathered wood on שבת*.

Why weren’t they put together?

The שפתי חכמים explains: Regarding the מקושש, they knew he was חייב מיתה, however, they were uncertain which מיתה to give him.

Whereas, regarding the מברך, they were unsure if he was חייב מיתה at all.

Accordingly, the מברך was put separately! If he would be put in the same prison as a person who is חייב מיתה, he too would be thinking that he is חייב מיתה! If the מברך would end up not receiving מיתה, for those few hours sharing prison with the מקושש he will undergo extra tremendous נפש אגמת which is not part of his punishment.

Therefore, he was put in a separate prison to prevent any unnecessary צער – even toward a sinner, someone who just caused a terrible חילול ה'.

We see how careful we must be – with using much חכמה in order to be נוהג כבוד זה לזה.

This is our עבודה in this תקופה. This is our mission between the קרבן העומר – the animal food, and the קרבן שתי הלחם – the human food.

This is what we must work on during these days. This is our הכנה for מתן תורה. These תורה הקדושה enable us to acquire.

These are the days to purify ourselves, to eradicate any חלק הבהמי, in order to arrive fully prepared with our "דרך ארץ" so that we should reach שבועות and receive the השפעות of our קבלת התורה תש"פ.

**"שאינה שוכנת בגוף שאינה בעל מידות",
- for He does not reside in a גוף who is not of (טובות) מדות.**

Transcribed by אברהם דוב הכהן כהן - Avrohom Dov Kohn.