5 Iyar, 5775 April 24, 2015

פרשת אחרי-מות קדושים

1)R’ Akivaonthe wordsואהבת לרעך כמוך says that this is a great rule (כלל גדול) of the Torah. What makes this a great rule more than others?[[1]](#footnote-2)

2)Why is it that in a leap year we don’t have doubleParshios?[[2]](#footnote-3)

During the 49 days of Sefira we work on a different trait each day. Indeed, the term מדה yields a Gematria of 49. מדה means measure and a character trait since that is the measure of a person. The Pasuk tells us וכמטמונים תחפשנה[[3]](#footnote-4); search out the Torah as if it were hidden treasures. Breaking up the word מטמונים we see that it spellsמט מונים as these 49 days we count are treasures since it is days we can rectify our character.[[4]](#footnote-5)In regard to Sefira it states וספרתם לכם; you shall count for yourselves.[[5]](#footnote-6)וספרתם is related to ספיר- shine, refine[[6]](#footnote-7) as this is what we do during Sefira. It says שבע שבתות **תמימות** תהיינה meaning during the weeks of Sefira we need to be **תמים** תהי-ה עם ה' אלה-יך.[[7]](#footnote-8)

The Mishna[[8]](#footnote-9) tells us know where you come from, where you are going and to whom you will give דין וחשבון to. We start out by Pesach and conclude with Shavuos. These Yom Tovim are connected with Sefira and as the Ramban tells us that Pesach and Shavuos are like one big Yom Tov and Sefirais like the days of CholHamoedthat connect the two. This is just as it says [[9]](#footnote-10)שלח את עמי ויעבדוני;send out my people that they may serve me. On Pesach we were sent out but the purpose is Shavuos (ויעבדוני).[[10]](#footnote-11) With this introduction we can now appreciate a profound meaning in that Mishna: know where you came from refers to Pesach. Where are you headed refers to Shavuos. לפני מי ...דין וחשבון is a reference to the days of Sefira as מי yields a Gematria of 50. So לפני מי refers to Sefira, the days before the 50th day, Shavuos. This is when we give judgement and accounting on ourselves with our Avoda and Middos.[[11]](#footnote-12)

The Mishna asks what is the proper way that one should cling to. Among the traits mentioned, R’ Elazar says לב טובand the Mishna ends off thatלב טובincludes the other traits mentioned there.[[12]](#footnote-13) The BneiYisosscharpoints out thatלב טוב has a numerical value of 49 which refers to the days of the Sefira. These days are broken up into two parts: the first 32-until Lag Baomer- which is the equivalent of לב andthe last 17, the equivalent ofטוב.[[13]](#footnote-14)It is with a לב טוב that we work on our Middos during Sefira. Theterm עומר means a measure, to gather (as in the Melacha in HilchosShabbos-מעמר) and enslave (as in[[14]](#footnote-15)לא תתעמר). This is because this is the time of year we work on our character which takes us out of our enslavement to our bad traits leading us to unity.

The Avoda of the first 32 days of the Sefira is to works on our traits. We are told the students of R’ Akiva died during the first 32 days of the Sefira[[15]](#footnote-16) becauseשלא נהגו כבוד זה לזה. This is alluded to in the word כבוד as it yields a Gematria of 32. They died at this time specifically as this is the time to work on our Middos.[[16]](#footnote-17) This gives us a deeper insight as to why R’ Akiva is the one who said ואהבת לרעך כמוך is a כלל גדול since he experienced the loss of 24,000 students because of lack of Middos.

R’ Zeira was asked במה הארכת ימים; with what did you merit longevity. The response: ... לא ששתי בתקלת חבירי, I wasn’t happy when my friend stumbled.[[17]](#footnote-18) R’ YitzchokVorka interprets this that I couldn’t be happy with my Simcha while my friend was having a downfall. When R’ ShlomoFriefeld was a Bachur in Chaim Berlin a boy came to check out the yeshiva. It was two in the morning and the boy didn’t have a bed. R’ Friefeld, being in the Beis Midrash at that time, gave up his bed that night by telling the boy there was a bed set up for him.[[18]](#footnote-19)The saying goes “Make your friends family and your family friends.”

If one wants to prove to himself that he was right and didn’t make mistakes in a certain decision he would put his calculation under scrutiny and testing. Similarly, the DevashHaseda explains that if one wants to know if his LimudHatorah is authentic, he shouldcheckwhere his AhavasYisrael is holding (ואהבת).

The last 17 days of Sefira are a preparation for accepting the Torah. Indeed, the 17thParsha in the Torah is Yisro- the Parsha of Mattan Torah. In fact, the Torah is referred to as טוב.[[19]](#footnote-20)

Sefira is followed by Shavuos, Matan Torah. It says לבב חכמהלמנות ימינו כן הודע ונביא.[[20]](#footnote-21)למנות ימינו; count your days refers to the days of Sefira that we count. The words לבב חכמהונביא; bring in Chochmarefers to Shavuos, ChochmasHatorah. This pattern follows the dictum דרך ארץ קדמה לתורה[[21]](#footnote-22) as we work on our Middos (דרך ארץ) and then we have Shavuos (Torah).[[22]](#footnote-23)Now we can have a deeper appreciation of why there was כאיש אחד בלב אחד before Mattan Torah as first we need proper Middos before we receive the Torah.[[23]](#footnote-24)With this we can grasp ואנשי קודש תהיון לי[[24]](#footnote-25)- first be a Mench and then Kodesh. Noachconducted himself like that as it says[[25]](#footnote-26) he was anאיש צדיק. This also explains Hillel’s statement[[26]](#footnote-27) to the one who asked him to teach the Torah on one foot- ‘that which you hate don’t do to your friend.’The expression goes “before you can see G-d,you need to see others.”

We are taught to receive everyoneבסבר פנים יפות; cheerful face.[[27]](#footnote-28)סבר means logic as in a Sevara in the Gemara.פנים is rooted in פנמיות; inside and יפות means beautiful. We should think of the beautiful person inside. How different would we interact with people if we did this. After all, “strangers are just friends waiting to happen.”

At times we may be critical of one’s behavior. We are instructed to judge favorably.[[28]](#footnote-29)ואהבת לרעך כמוך- just as we love ourselves although we have faults,likewise we should love others even though they have faults. If we love everyone then we are always in the presence of people we love. Now, that is great company.Theנשיאיםdidn’t contribute for the Mishkan right away as they said we will complete whatever the people don’t bring. The Pnei Menachem[[29]](#footnote-30) explains theirsin was that they didn’t see their fellow Jew with a טובת עין. How could one think that the Jews wouldn’t give everything needed for the Mishkan.

Even when we have to give rebuke it should be because it is our friend- for his benefit as it says הוכח תוכיח את **עמיתך**.[[30]](#footnote-31)If one wants to know if his criticism is constructive, he should evaluate if he is willing to help the person overcome that trait or behavior. Remember, “it is not what you say but how you say it.”

One difference between a Chassid and a Litvak is that a Chassid behaves in accordance with Kabbalah and a Litvak with Halacha. As a result of this when giving an Aliya to a Rav who is a Litvak he receives the 3rd Aliya since this is the first Aliya available after Kohen and Levi. In contrast, a ChassidishRebbe would receive the 6th Aliya because the 6th corresponds to Yosef who is צדיק יסוד עולם. Therefore, this Aliya is given to the Tzadik. Double Parshiyos[[31]](#footnote-32) allude to the concept of unity as it is jointed together.[[32]](#footnote-33)R’ Moshe Wolfson points out that when observing double Parshios we notice it says[[33]](#footnote-34)ששי שלישי כשהן מחוברין; this is the 6th Aliya and the 3rd when it is a double Parsha. This also can represent the unity there should be among ourselves. We are taught the Yam Suf didn’t want to split for Moshe because man was created on the 6th day and the Yam was created on the 3rd day. However, finally it did split as it says ויגער בים סוף ויחרב.[[34]](#footnote-35) We see again the idea of the 3rd and 6th unifying since the sea was on the 3rd day and Moshe (man) on the 6th day.

Jealousy came to the world because of the moon as Rashi[[35]](#footnote-36) tells us that the sun and moon were originally created the same size. Observing various sins we notice it contains jealousy. Some examples of this are the נחשwho was jealous of Adam and Chavah, קין which is rooted in קנאה kills Hevel, Korach, Yeravam Ben Nivat, Rechavam and so on. The trait of jealousy and hatred are relatedas is expressed in the episode with Yosef and his brothers-ויקנאו בו אחיו and וישנאו אותו.[[36]](#footnote-37)

We are taught that there is noBeisHamikdash because of SinasChinam.[[37]](#footnote-38)Nevertheless, in the days of the future BeisHamikdash there will be no jealousy as it says[[38]](#footnote-39)אפרים לא יקנא את יהודה. It will be אור הלבנה כאור החמה as we say in Kiddush Levana. We also say thereדוד מלך ישראל חי וקיםsince it is the idea of rebirth, which will be in the time of Moshiach. A leap year bridges the gap of the lunar and solar year. This represents the idea of unity. It is now understood why we don’t have double Parshios on a leap year since we get the message of unity from the leap year itself.We should merit to make each day of Sefiracount and not just count the days, thereby increasing unity among us.

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1. Kedoshim 19:18, Rashi. The ChasamSofer asks that R’Akiva (Baba Metzia 62a) tells usלחיי חברך חייך קודמין so how can we fulfill ואהבת לרעך כמוך? כמוך isa great rule in a LimudHatora in that we should learn with others even if it will be Mevatelour ownTorah. We should love our friends like we love ourselves and his learning should be considered to us as if it was ours.חייך קודמין applies to physicality. [↑](#footnote-ref-2)
2. We can’t say the reason is in order to have enough Parshios for the weeks of the year since the Torah is perfect and exact. [↑](#footnote-ref-3)
3. Mishlei 2:4 [↑](#footnote-ref-4)
4. The Gra (on Mishlei 4:13) - we are here to break r middos. [↑](#footnote-ref-5)
5. The 7 weeks are like the ז' נקיים of a Nida. Then we can enter into the Chupa (Shavuos) with Hashem. (OhrHachaim, Emor 23:15, see Siduro Shel Shabbos 7,2,3). [↑](#footnote-ref-6)
6. Zohar, Emor, 97b. [↑](#footnote-ref-7)
7. Devarim 18:13. Just as when one says הרי זה עולה it is a KorbonOlah so too by just saying each day’s Sefiraהיום יום ...לעומר it sanctifies the day (SichosBiavodas Hashem, pg 154). [↑](#footnote-ref-8)
8. PirkeiAvos 3:1 [↑](#footnote-ref-9)
9. As in Shemos 7:26 [↑](#footnote-ref-10)
10. See SeferHachinuch, 306 [↑](#footnote-ref-11)
11. Bas Ayin,Acherei Mos. The DivreiYisrael says on the famous words (Yuma 85b) לפני מי אתה מטהר ומי מטהר אתכם that לפני מי- before the 50th day (as מי totals 50)- the period of Sefira which is 49 days, we purify ourselves through improvement. ומי- on Shavuos (50th day) Hashem purifies us. [↑](#footnote-ref-12)
12. PirkeiAvos, 2:13 [↑](#footnote-ref-13)
13. It says ליבי ובשרי ליבי.is from the word לב which has a Gematria of 32. This refers to the first 32 days of Sefira.בשרי is the same letters as רשבי who is R’ Shimon Bar Yochai. This refers to Lag Baomer which is the 33rd day. Additionally, it says כבוד ועוז (Tehillim 29). כבודis 32 in Gematria referring to the first 32days of Sefira. The last 17 days we prepare for Torah.עוז is Torah as it says ה' עוז לעמו יתן (Tehillim 29:11). [↑](#footnote-ref-14)
14. Devarim 21:14 [↑](#footnote-ref-15)
15. The Meiri and other Risonim say that we have a Mesora that the Talmidim of R’ Akiva stopped dying on Lag Baomer. The Pasuk says ארך ימים בימינה (Mishlei 3). Lag Baomer is the 18th of Iyar.איירshares the same numerical value as ארך. יח(18) consists of the letters חי. So it is that which isארך חי and the Talmidmof R’ Akiva stopped dying now (Mahral, NesivHatora in Nesivos Olam, 12). [↑](#footnote-ref-16)
16. See Mishnas R’ Ahron volume 3, p 17-8, MichtavMieliyahu, 4, p 124 and Shem Mishmuel, Vayikra, p 94 [↑](#footnote-ref-17)
17. Megila 28a [↑](#footnote-ref-18)
18. Biography of R’ Friefeld, p 40 [↑](#footnote-ref-19)
19. Avoda Zara 19b [↑](#footnote-ref-20)
20. Tehillim 90 [↑](#footnote-ref-21)
21. TannaDveiEliyahu, 1 [↑](#footnote-ref-22)
22. See ChidushaiHarim Al Hatorah, SefirasHaomer [↑](#footnote-ref-23)
23. Yisro, 19:2, Rashi. [↑](#footnote-ref-24)
24. Mishpatim 22:30 [↑](#footnote-ref-25)
25. 6:9 [↑](#footnote-ref-26)
26. Shabbos 31a [↑](#footnote-ref-27)
27. PirkeiAvos 1:15. The Bartenura (Avos 4:15) says we should precede in greeting even a non-Jew in the market place. [↑](#footnote-ref-28)
28. Parenthetically, at times this also applies to us as it says judge כל האדם favorably. This is because sometimes we may be down and too hard on ourselves. [↑](#footnote-ref-29)
29. Vayakhel, 35:27, Rashi. [↑](#footnote-ref-30)
30. Kedoshim, 19:17 [↑](#footnote-ref-31)
31. We also have double Parshios by the three weeks- Chukas-Balak and Matos-Masei since BeisHamikdash was destroyed because of SinasChinam [↑](#footnote-ref-32)
32. Looking deeper into the double Parshios, we will notice that its content is about בין אדם לחבירו- not to speak Loshon Hara, helping the poor and so on. [↑](#footnote-ref-33)
33. As inTazria, 13:40 [↑](#footnote-ref-34)
34. Tehillim 106:9 [↑](#footnote-ref-35)
35. Bireishis1:16 [↑](#footnote-ref-36)
36. Breishis 37:4,11 [↑](#footnote-ref-37)
37. Yuma 9b. Tangentially, Dovid took care of מפיבשת whose family was killed out (Shmuel 2, 9). This is the meaning in לא תעמוד על דם רעיך (Kedoshim 19:16) as Dovid didn’t stand by while everyone was being killed rather he took care of מפיבשת. Is it any wonder that דם are the initials ofדוד,מפיבשת. [↑](#footnote-ref-38)
38. Yeshaya 11:13. [↑](#footnote-ref-39)