

## Bringing the Farbrengen Home

### MAKING IT COUNT

by Rabbi Shlomo Yosef Zevin  
L'Torah u'LeMoadim p.166  
Translated by Rabbi Shaul Wertheimer

"And you should count" - Parshas Emor 23:15.

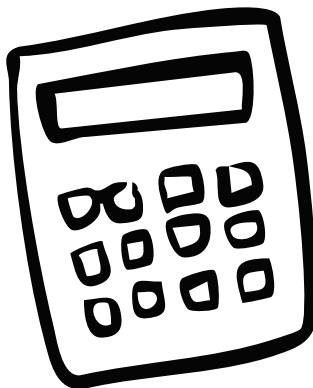
Counting something shows that it's significant, as the halachic principle states, "Something that is regularly counted is not nullified (*bottul*)" (Beitzah 3b). That is, when an item is regularly sold by the number [as opposed to being sold by weight or bundle], this is an indicator that it is important, and thus is not nullified [i.e., *bottul b'shishim*, 1 in 60 etc.]. As we find in Rashi's commentary at the beginning of the book of Bamidbar: "Due to the preciousness [of the Jewish People, Hashem] counts them all the time."


The days and years of a person's life must be regarded with importance, in order that they not be squandered. Every moment is precious, never to return. The past is gone, irretrievable. Therefore, our time must be counted and accounted for.

It has been explained that the seven weeks of the verse "They should be seven complete weeks" signify the "days of man" (Tehillim 90:10). And thus: "You should count – *u'sefartem lachem*." These seven weeks are to be counted and calculated.

However, there is counting and then there is *counting*. The bookkeeper of a store, for example, can certainly be said to count and tally the revenue; yet this is not the same as when the owner counts the proceeds. When the owner tallies up the revenue, he knows that it belongs to him; if he earns money he is happy, and if he is in a deficit he is perturbed. The bookkeeper is not affected in this way, as he is just a worker making a technical calculation.

He doesn't have the joy nor the pain, and the counting doesn't touch his being at all.



One may be inclined to count the number of his hours and days like a hired worker, whom it does not affect. The Torah therefore says: "And you should count;" and the gemora explains, "that each and every one of you must count" (Menachos 65b). Each and every one of us must feel that we are the *baal habayis*, that the counting pertains directly to me; it's my *cheshbon*, my accounting, not someone else's. 



### Lag BaOmer according to Bnei Yissoschor

One particular custom practiced on the day of Lag BaOmer is unique: Children go to parks and fields to play with bows and arrows. What is the reason for this peculiar custom? One well-known explanation has to do with the fact that during Rabbi Shimon's lifetime, no rainbow ever appeared in the sky. This is profoundly significant, because the Torah relates that the rainbow represented Hashem's covenant never to destroy the world again even if the human race would degenerate to its status prior to the Flood. But as long as Rabbi Shimon was alive, his merit and piety alone were enough to ensure that Hashem would not regret His creation, with no need for the rainbow. On the day of Rabbi Shimon's passing, however, the world was in need of the rainbow. Thus, each year on that day we recall this man's greatness by playing with the bow.

### JUST שׁו"ת ME A QUESTION

**Q: If Rabbi Shimon bar Yochai passed away on Lag BaOmer, then why don't we say tachanun?**

A: The custom is to omit tachanun on Lag BaOmer, as well as to increase in simcha on this day (Rama 493:2).

The custom in the Land of Israel is to go to the grave of Rabbi Shimon on this day. One year on Lag BaOmer, the Arizal went with his disciples to Meron. Reb Avraham HaLevi (others say it was Reb Gedalye HaLevi) recited *Nachem* (the prayer added in the Amidah on Tisha B'Av). He was accustomed to recite *Nachem* every day, because he truly felt the pain of the destruction of the Beis HaMikdash.

The Arizal said that Rabbi Shimon said to tell him, "Why are you reciting *Nachem* on my day of simcha? You will need to be consoled in the near future!" Afterwards, Reb Avraham's son passed away.

We see from this story that one is not to recite *tachanun* on Lag BaOmer (Ateres Zekeinim 493).

**Q: Does an Avel (mourner) daven for the amud on Lag BaOmer?**

A: There are different customs. Some do, while others maintain that an *Avel* does not daven for the *Amud* on any day when tachanun is not recited.

א גוט שבת!

# Let it Shine, Let it Shine, Let It Shine!

## THE SECRET OF EDUCATION

by Rabbi Shaul Wertheimer

What is the secret of education?

This week's parsha, Emor, opens with the laws of the Kohanim (in English: priests). There are two critical laws by which the kohen is limited: He is not permitted to come in contact with a corpse (lots of details here, for the sake of brevity I'll leave it at that); and secondly, there are restrictions with whom a kohen can marry (for example, a divorcee).

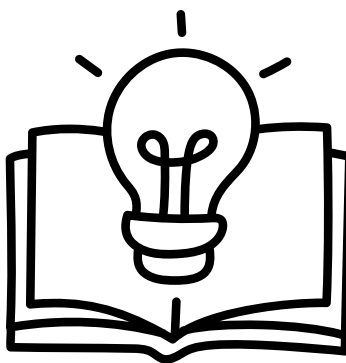
How does a Kohen explain to his child that he is different than everyone else?

Children may be going to visit the sick in a hospital, but a kohen must tell his child that it's not so simple for him to join; it depends where, which hospital and so forth. A kohen must tell his child that even if he meets a nice girl, there is a chance that he may not be permitted to marry her.

How does a kohen ensure that his child doesn't become resentful that he is not allowed to do what every other kid does? How can the kohen ensure that his children experience the joy of Torah and the pleasure of Judaism?

The parsha opens:

"And G-d said to Moses, 'Say to the Kohanim, the sons of Aaron: You shall say to your children, 'A Kohen must not make himself impure through [contact with] a dead person among his people" (Lev. 21:1).



Noting the repetition of the word "say / Emor" Rashi offers:

"The meaning of the double-expression is that in addition to Moses telling the Kohanim themselves to keep these laws, Moses should also caution the adult Kohanim about educating their children in these areas."

The Hebrew word "caution" is *l'hazhir*. To caution the adults to educate their children.

Why doesn't Rashi just use the same word as the verse itself, *emor*, to say?

Moreover, the word *l'hazhir* is a curious choice. Typically, the Hebrew word indicates a warning to distance oneself from prohibited matters. Education that is full of cautionary warnings is bound to fall short.

Yet here lies the secret of education.

*L'hazhir*, to caution or warn, also means to shine, to illuminate.

Even the warnings need to be full of light.

Every one of us can be considered a kohen in a spiritual sense, as the verse states, "and you will be a kingdom of Kohanim to Me" (Exodus 19:6).

If our Judaism is full of groans and frowns, our children will detect that, more than anything positive that we say.

*L'hazhir gedolim al ha'ketanim* -- the secret of education is to make it bright, to make it shine. Our Judaism need be illuminated with joy, it is not meant to drag us down.

Torah and Mitzvos are *geshmak* (an untranslatable Yiddish word, the closest I can come is pleasure). Today, more than ever, our enduring legacy needs to be transmitted with a smile, a warm word, affection, and light.

*"The wise will shine like the radiance (zohar) of the firmament" - Daniel 12:3*

Based on Toras Menachem 5748, vol.3, p.324-7; and a shiur by Rabbi Shneur Ashkenazi: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Adr6aDKjfl>



### Hayom Yom

15 Iyar

In the Alter Rebbe's time, there was a saying common among his chassidim:

"The piece of bread that I have is yours just as much as it is mine."

And they would say "yours" before "mine."

בימי רבנו הזקן היה שגור בפי החסידים הפתגם: דער שטיקעל ברויט וואס איך האב, איז ער דיינער ווי מיינער. והיו מקדימים מלת "דיינער" – דיינער ווי מיינער

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