

OVERVIEW of the Daf

- 1) **Obtaining wheat and barley from distant places (cont.)**
The novelty of the fact that Mordechai knew seventy languages is explained.
- 2) **MISHNAH:** The Mishnah describes the process of obtaining the barley for the Omer.
- 3) **Refuting the Baitusim**
A Baraisa in Megilas Ta'anis is cited that discusses the festivals that were enacted in response to refuting the Tzedukim and Baitusim.
The debate between R' Yochanan ben Zakkai's and the Baitusim is recorded.
Four other Tannaim offer alternative ways to refute the Baitusim's understanding of the pasuk that discusses when to harvest the barley for the Omer.
- 4) **Sefiras HaOmer**
A Baraisa teaches that each person is obligated to count the Omer and R' Yosi bar Yehudah explains how we know that the count begins the night after the first day of Yom Tov. ■

REVIEW and Remember

1. Describe the procedure of obtaining barley for the Omer
2. Why is there a holiday from the beginning of Nissan until the eighth of Nissan?
3. How did R' Yochanan ben Zakkai refute the Baitusim?
4. How do we know that the phrase ממחרת השבת refers to after Yom Tov?

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Mr. and Mrs. Dan Shmikler
in honor of the Bar Mitzva of their son
Yitzchak Yehuda Shmikler

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for all you do from the Kollel Beth Hatalmud.
Dr Lanzer -Melbourne Australia

Distinctive INSIGHT

The holidays listed in Megillas Ta'anis

תנו רבנן אליו יומיא דלא להתענאה בהון ומקצתהון דלא למספד בהון

The day on which the omer offering is brought is described in the Torah (Vayikra 23:15) as being the "day after Shabbos." Our sages explain that this does not refer to Sunday, the day after the Shabbos, but rather is a reference to the day after the first day of the Yom Tov of Pesach. This interpretation of "after the Shabbos" was disputed by the Baitusim who claimed that it taught that the omer is always to be brought on a Sunday. This disagreement continued until the sages prevailed in their contention to explain this halacha correctly, and a holiday was established to commemorate that the correct interpretation of the verse was set. The date for this victory celebration was set from the eighth of Nisan until the end of Pesach (until after the twenty-first of Nisan.) This holiday was recorded in Megillas Ta'anis, a scroll in which a full list of minor holidays was recorded. According to the text in our Gemara, it is prohibited to eulogize on these days, but according to Rashi's version of the Gemara, the nature of this celebration was that it was prohibited to fast during these days.

The Gemara lists the beginning of the Baraisa of Megillas Ta'anis. This list contained a listing of days where some miracle had taken place whereby a group or city was miraculously saved. On these days we were prohibited from fasting, and some, whose level of celebration was more intense, were set with an additional prohibition not to eulogize.

Now that the Beis HaMikdash has been destroyed, there is a disagreement regarding the status of the dates on this list (see Rosh HaShana 19b). We rule according to the opinion of R' Yose who says that when the Beis HaMikdash is functioning, these days must be observed with their restrictions, as it is appropriate to celebrate the goodness God has showered upon us. However, with the destruction of the Beis HaMikdash, these holidays have been cancelled, because we are in a state of mourning. The only exceptions to the days being cancelled are Purim and Chanukah, which are still celebrated until today.

The Gemara in Ta'anis (15b, Mishnah) tells us that regarding the holidays listed in Megillas Ta'anis on which it is prohibited to eulogize, all opinions agree that the day before these dates are also restricted from eulogizing, in order to strengthen the observance of these dates. Shitta Miktetzes asks, therefore, why the sages established the Fast of

HALACHAH Highlight

When to count the Omer

וספרתם לכם שתהא ספירה לכל אחד ואחד

“And you should count for yourself” meaning that each and every person should count

Rambam¹ subscribes to the opinion that even nowadays there is a Biblical commandment to count the Omer. Although there are other authorities who agree, the majority of Poskim maintain that the Biblical commandment to count the Omer applies only when the Korban Ha’omer is brought. Nowadays that we do not offer the Korban Ha’omer the obligation to count the Omer is only Rabbinic². Shulchan Aruch³ writes that those who are meticulous in their mitzvah observance do not count the Omer until after tzeis hakochavim. The reason, explains Mishnah Berurah,⁴ that it is only those who are meticulous who wait until after tzeis hakochavim is that since most Poskim maintain that counting the Omer nowadays is a Rabbinic enactment, one could be lenient and adopt the position that night begins after sunset. However, those who are meticulous do not fulfill even Rabbinic mitzvos in a way that involves a dispute and they wait until after tzeis hakochavim. Shulchan Aruch concludes that the practice of those who are meticulous is the preferred practice to follow.

Sefer She’arim Metzuyanin B’Halach⁵ notes that although Shulchan Aruch and Mishnah Berurah do not differentiate between counting during the week or on erev Shab-

(Overview...continued from page 1)

Esther on the day before Purim. He answers that although Purim and Chanukah themselves were not cancelled, the restriction not to eulogize on the day before these holidays was cancelled. He also explains that the reading of the megillah on Purim is a strong means to reinforce Purim, so it was not necessary to reinforce Purim’s celebration with prohibiting eulogizing on the day before. ■

bos, nevertheless, Teshuvos Maharshal does draw a distinction and asserts that it is permitted to count during bein hashemashos on erev Shabbos and it is unnecessary even for those who are meticulous in their mitzvah observance to wait until tzeis hakochavim. Aruch HaShulchan⁶ also notes that on erev Shabbos people often count during bein heshemashos. Teshuvos Sheraga HaMeir⁷ traces this practice of counting during bein hashemashos to the time of the Rishonim. It must be emphasized, however, that this leniency only allows for counting after sunset – shekiah. This leniency does not extend to those who make an “early Shabbos” and daven ma’ariv after plag but before shekiah. Those people must still wait until after shekiah before counting the Omer. ■

1. רמב"ם פ"ז מהלי תמידין ומוספין הכ"ד.
2. שו"ת יחווה דעת ח"א סי' כ"ג.
3. שו"ע או"ח סי' תפ"ט סעי' ב'.
4. מ"ב שם ס"ק י"ד.
5. סי' ק"כ סק"ג.
6. ערוה"ש שם סעי' ז'.
7. שו"ת שרגא המאיר (ח"ו סי' מ"א). ■

STORIES Off the Daf

The Need for Repetition

”שלוש פעמים על כל דבר ודבר...”

Someone once asked the Divrei Yechezkel of Shinova, zt”l, to explain the custom to say the invocation of “Askinu Seudasa” of Melaveh Malkah three times. “After all, we say a similar nusach at every other meal on Shabbos only once. Why specifically regarding melaveh malkah do we say this three times?”

The Divrei Yechezkel’s reply was based on the practice described on today’s daf. “In Menachos 65 we find that

the sages enacted a very interesting ceremony for the cutting of the omer. When it grew dark, each reaper would ask if it was night and the crowd would answer, “Yes.” This was repeated three times.

The reapers would ask “Is this a sickle?” Again the crowd would answer, “Yes.” This was also repeated three times.

“Should I reap?”

“Yes.”

“The Mishnah explains why such elaboration was deemed necessary. The Baitusim only believed in the validity of the written Torah. Since the verse says to bring the omer, ‘ממחרת השבת’ — the day after Shabbos,’ they believed that

we should wait until the Sunday after Pesach. To ingrain in the simple folk that our sages had a tradition that the omer must be cut the day after Pesach, each question and answer was repeated three times.

“The same is true regarding melaveh malkah which is highly neglected by the masses. Chassidim say the Askinu Seudasa of Melaveh Malkah three times to ingrain in anyone nearby that the fourth meal of Shabbos is also obligatory. This emphasizes the importance of this mitzvah to a person and his family so that he will not learn from the ignorant who ignore this precious mitzvah.”¹ ■

1. דברי יחזקאל, ליקוטים ■