



Yeshiva University High School For  
Boys



# שמע קולנו

“יתגבר כארי לעמוד בבוקר לעבודת בוראו”

Parshas Emor

פרשת אמור

## SEFIRAS HAOMER

*Rabbi Shimon Schenker*

*Associate Principal WASHB*

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There was a man, who at the end of the first Seder was told by one of his kids to count Sefira. He responded that it is incorrect, we start tomorrow night. Why is this? If we are going from Pesach to Shavuos wouldn't you think that we should just start counting right away? After all, the Sefer Hachinuch tells us that the counting is to connect Pesach to Shavuos. While they are different Yomim Tovim, there is a bridge: Sefiras Haomer. After we become a dependent people, the Sefer Hachinuch tells us that the whole purpose of bringing Bnei Yisrael out of Mitzrayim, was to give them the Torah. Why don't we start counting on the first night?

The Sefer Hachinuch answers that it is very important to just stop and experience Pesach. While we are experiencing Pesach, we need to realize how much Hashem loves us, he took us out of Mitzrayim, split the Yam Suf, gave us Man and water. Once we understand this and take one day and one day of Pesach to internalize it, then we can move forward with Sefiras Haomer, build towards Shavuos, and fully accept the Torah at Har Sinai.

We see this as well, on Har Sinai itself. When Moshe got the Luchos, the first of the Aseres Hadibros was

“אנכי ה' אלקיך אשר הוצאתיך מארץ מצרים...”

I am Hashem your God who took you out of Egypt.”

The Sefer Hachinuch asks, why isn't the second

part of the Passuk, who created the world, instead of who took you out of Egypt? What's the connection?

The Sefer Hachinuch answers that the words Anochi Hashem Elokecha teach us that Hashem runs the universe. The words Asher Hotzesicha Me'erezt Mitzrayim, teach us that Hashem is involved in every single detail of **my** life. The Torah was not only given to Bnei Yisrael as a whole, but rather to every person individually. The ultimate goal of Limud Hatorah is to learn Hashem's teachings, so that we can build a relationship of love with Hashem. In order to love something, one needs to trust in it. The first day of Pesach is to remind us that Hashem is in our lives, after that we can learn his messages and build a relationship of love.

## **NEVER LOSE HOPE**

*Shimi Kaufman ('21)*

Of the many Yomim Tovim present on the Jewish calendar, two of them, Chanukah and Purim, have the distinction of being Rabbinically instituted, unlike the other Biblical holidays. The Rokeach writes that while there is no explicit Passuk that talks about these Yomim Tovim, the Torah does allude to them. In Parshas Emor, immediately after discussing the Halachos of the Yomim Tovim, the Torah talks about the Halachos regarding the Menorah and the Lechem Hapanim. The Menorah, the Rokeach writes, is a reference to Chanukah, while the Lechem Hapanim are a reference to Pu-

rim. While it is obvious how the Menorah is referring to Chanukah, how are the Lechem Hapanim hinting at Purim? The Rokeach answers that they are a reference to the Seudas Purim, the festive meal that there is a Mitzvah to eat on Purim day. However, this answer raises another question - of all the Mitzvos of Purim, why would the Torah choose to hint at Seudas Purim? In addition, how do the Lechem Hapanim have anything to do with this festive meal?

The Bach writes that the reason for the Mitzvah to have a meal on Purim is to repent for our sin of going to Achashverosh's party. The Mishnah Berurah quotes the Levush, who says that since Haman wanted to physically wipe us out, we celebrate with physical pleasure such as food and drink. This Bach appears strange at first. How does eating a festive meal atone for our sin in going to Achashverosh's party? In order to answer this question, we must first understand what exactly the sin of the Jews was in going to this party. The Chachamim tell us that Achashverosh had been worried about the prophecy of Yirmiyah, which stated that after 70 years the Jews would return to the second Beis Hamikdash. By Achashverosh's calculations, 70 years had passed, and the Jews were still in Galus. Thus, Achashverosh was celebrating the fact that the prophecy had not yet been fulfilled and his empire would continue to reign on. This was the reason that Achashverosh

used Keilim from the Beis Hamikdash at his party - he was trying to show that his kingdom was greater than the Beis Hamikdash. By attending this party, Bnei Yisrael were buying in to Achashverosh's disheartening message, and for this they deserved to be wiped out. Thus, in order to counteract this message of hopelessness and despair, we partake in a festive meal in order to symbolize that though we may be in Galus, we have hope that we will eventually be redeemed. We repent for the meal that we ate in despair by eating a meal during which we are hopeful to what the future holds for the Jewish people, no matter how bleak things may seem.

The Chizkuni writes that the twelve loaves of the Lechem Hapanim represented the twelve Shevatim of Am Yisrael. One of the most miraculous aspects of the Lechem Hapanim was their ability to remain fresh throughout the entire week, without becoming stale or rotten. This is one of the greatest aspects of the Jewish people - even through tremendous strife and Tzarah, we are able to remain "fresh" and have a positive outlook on life. This is why the Torah chose to use the Lechem Hapanim to symbolize the Seudas Purim. Just as the Lechem Hapanim demonstrated the Jew's ability to remain positive even when things look bleak, so too the purpose of the Purim Seudah is to show that the Jewish Nation is hopeful even in the face of imminent destruction.

The Gemara (Megillah 16a) writes that when Haman came to Mordechai in order to bestow upon him the honor that Achashverosh had granted him, he found Mordechai learning. When Haman asked Mordechai

what he was learning, Mordechai responded that he was learning the Halachos of the Korban Mincha that was brought in the Beis Hamikdash with a handful of flour. Upon hearing this, Haman exclaimed "your handful of flour will overturn my 10,000 Shekalim". The Gemara states that it was at this point that the decree of destruction upon the Jewish people was annulled. Haman understood that the Jews' lack of faith in a redemption that would cause their ultimate downfall. When Haman saw Mordechai learning the Halachos that applied in the Beis Hamikdash, he realized that the Jew's had not given up hope of a Geulah, and that his plan had failed. It was this hope for the future that caused the salvation of the Jews on Purim, and that is why the Torah chose to specifically commemorate this Mitzvah. The essence of Purim is to remember that though times may be tough, we always must be hopeful to the future. This Purim, we must remember that though things look bleak, we must look hopefully towards the future. If we do this, then we will see that bright future come to life when we receive the Third Beis Hamikdash, Bimheirah Biyameinu Amen!

### Gadolim Glimpse

Rabbi Yitzchak Alfasi (1013–1103), more commonly known as the Rif, is most famous his commentary on the Gemara. He was born in Qalaat Hammad, Fez. He learnt in [Kairouan, Tunisia](#) under Rabbeinu Nissim and under Rabbeinu Chananel the two Gedolei Hador of the Sefardi world. In 1045 the Moroccan community made him a yeshiva where students came from all over to learn. His two most famous talmidim were Rabbi Yehuda Halevi and Rabbi Yosef Ibn Migash. He died on the 10th of Iyar, [5785](#). He left a long lasting impact on the learning of Gemara.

—Meir Morell ('21)

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- We are excited to announce our new MTA Torah WhatsApp chat which will have two Divrei Torah from our Rebbeim sent out every Monday and Thursday until Shavuos
- If you would like to sponsor an issue of Shema Koleinu, please email [shemakoleinu@yuhsb.org](mailto:shemakoleinu@yuhsb.org)
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