



# Ask The Rabbi

Researched at Ohr Somayach, Jerusalem

## This Issue Contains:

1. The Little Things that Count
2. Answer to Yiddle Riddle



Avraham Silvers <silvers@netvision.net.il> wrote:

Dear Rabbi,

*My son Akiva has the following question:*

*I am 12 years old. At parshat 'Emor' I will be observing my Bar Mitzvah. Until now I have been counting the Omer with a bracha [blessing]. When I reach thirteen I will be counting the Omer as an adult and previously I was only counting as a minor for 'chinuch' [educational purposes]. When I become bar Mitzvah, should I continue counting with a bracha as I do have a certain level of 'Temmimut' [completeness], but on the other hand the quality of my mitzvah is not the same as if I had begun at the beginning?*

*Thank you for your time, Akiva Silvers*

Alan Shear of Yeshiva College South Africa <yeshcol@global.co.za > wrote:

Dear Rabbi

*Many people have asked me the following question which can really be a bit perplexing. A boy who has his bar mitzvah during Sefirat HaOmer, may he continue counting with a Bracha? This has practical application here right now, so a timely answer would be greatly appreciated. Many Thanks*

Dear Akiva & Alan,

The Torah says "From the day after Pesach you shall count seven **complete** weeks..." We therefore count each day for 49 days between Pesach and Shavuot, saying "today is the first day of the Omer, today is the second day of the Omer, etc." Each day we make a blessing.

The authorities differ whether each day's count is a mitzvah by itself, or if together all 49 days comprise one single mitzvah. The difference would be in a case where someone forget to count:

- If each day is a separate mitzvah, someone who forgot a day continues to fulfill the mitzvah by counting the following days. So he should continue counting and each day say the blessing.
- But if together all 49 days comprise one single mitzvah, someone who missed a day can no longer fulfill the mitzvah. Consequently, he can't say the blessing.

In practice, someone who forgets a day continues to count — in accordance with the first opinion — but does not say the blessing — in consideration of the second opinion.

But what should **you** do? On the one hand, you've counted every day! But since you're not yet *bar mitzvah* and aren't commanded by the Torah to count, perhaps your counting 'doesn't count.' Perhaps your "seven **complete** weeks" are **incomplete**.

Most *Poskim* rule that if you counted every day until your *bar mitzvah*, you continue counting with a blessing.

Interestingly enough, Akiva, the command to count the Omer is found in *parshat Emor* — your bar mitzvah parsha. The verse says "Count after Pesach, the day you bring the *Omer*

offering, seven complete weeks..." In Hebrew, the word '**complete**' is the 12<sup>th</sup> word of the verse. Perhaps this hints that even though you are only 12 years old and not yet *bar mitzvah*, your mitzvah of counting is nonetheless 'complete'!

Speaking of counting: Two professors of theoretical mathematic were debating how many fingers people have.

"Nine!" — said one.

"Ten!" — the other insisted.

Unable to convince one another through logical induction or proof, they decided to count.

"I say there are ten!" said one, lifting up his hands. "Go ahead and count!"

"Zero, one, two, three,..." began the other.

Sources:

- *Minchat Chinuch* Mitzvah 306
- *Aruch HaShulchan Orach Chaim* 489:15
- *Sheilot U'tshuvot Ktav Sofer* 99
- *Sheilot U'tshuvot Maharam Shick* 260

## Yiddle Riddle

**Last week we asked:** Three members of the Jewish People whose names are mentioned in the Torah did not go out of Egypt during the Exodus. Who are they?

**Answer:** Tziphora, Gershom and Eliezer. Moses' wife Tziphora and his two sons, Gershom and Eliezer, lived in Midian at the time of the Exodus from Egypt. Although Moses had planned to bring them along when he returned to Egypt, Aharon convinced him to the contrary. "Aren't there enough Jews suffering in Egypt already?" said Aharon.

Sources:

- Exodus 18:2,3 and Rashi

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