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**בית מדרש אור חיים**  
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**SOKAVA REBBE**

**Lag B'Omer:**  
Tue, May 9, 2023



**Pesach Sheini**  
Fri, May 5, 2023



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**Rabbi YY Jacobson**  
will be in town  
for shabbos



RABBI LANKRY  
**DEAR KEHILLA,**

## PARASHAT EMOR

It seems so unfair, the concept of Kohen Bal Mum (Kohen with a blemish) who can't offer services in the house of Hashem. The pasuk gives these examples; "a blind or lame or whose nose has no bridge, or has one limb longer than the other. A broken leg or arm or just abnormally long eyebrows, or a membrane on his eye, or a blemish in his eye, or dry skin etc..." It is not the blemished Kohens fault that Hashem made him this way. Why should he miss out serving in the Bais Hamikdash? Additionally, if he can't get a job in Hashem's house why should anyone else give him a job? If the blemish reduces his ability to work it is understandable but having long eyebrows or dry skin etc. doesn't affect his capacity.

The limitations of whom a Kohen can or can't marry are comprehensible. The prohibition of marrying a woman who acts improperly is clear and every divorce has two sides to the story. A Kohen Gadol however may not marry even a widow. Hashem took away this woman's husband; it is not a reflection on her at all. Why is she not acceptable as a wife for the Kohen Gadol? Both these laws seem to portray a lack of compassion on behalf of the Torah. What is the meaning of them?

At this time of the year that we mourn the death of the 24,000 students the great Rabbi Akiva. We learn that the cause of their death was that they did not express the proper respect to one another. This too seems a bit harsh. As talmidai chachomim every other aspect of their lives was complete except this small sensitivity that they were lacking. Is this justified to be taken from this world so prematurely? It is hard to wrap ones head around this vague concept.

Let's travel to the beginning in time to the first person that brought a Korban to Hashem. Kayin was a farmer and in order to say thanks to Hashem he offered some simple vegetables. There was no response from Hashem. His brother Hevel watched and mimicked his brother changing one detail. He brought a Korban from the nicest of his sheep to which Hashem responded immediately and accepted his offering. This sent Kayin into a rage; why him and not me? What was I lacking? Hashem did not eat the vegetables or the sheep so what does he care from what or how I gave the offering?

We learn a great lesson in Hashem's ways; it's never the quantity but always the quality. If and when you do something; do it right. It is better a little prayer with proper intent than hours of mindless reading of words.

The life and job of the Kohen is to connect us to Hashem. Therefore the proper connection is required and it must be a qualitative connection. If we were to bring a Korban and the Kohen showed up with a broken arm the entire process will be compromised. We would not look at the event of bringing a Korban seriously, it loses its grandeur. In all aspects of life the Kohen, due to his representation, needs and must follow a code that will be inspiring to all. This includes his marriage to a wife and personal grooming such as trimming his eye brows.

The same applies to Torah. The Rambam writes in the end of the laws of shmita and vowel that anyone who wants to connect himself to the tribe of Levy can do so with the study of Torah. This illustrates that the study of Torah and especially the perpetuation of Torah must be in the purest state. It's the quality of the student that is needed to be the transmitter of Torah and not the masses. Rabbi Akiva understood this and therefore after all the 24,000 passed away he started over with only 5 students. It is these outstanding students that transmitted the Torah and preserved it until this day.

Kind David heard people asking "when will the old man die and his son will take over and build the Bais Hamikdash?" These words were painful for King David to hear but he understood that they were yearning for a Bais Hamikdash to get closer to Hashem. David felt he was preventing the process and expressed his discomfort to Hashem. Hashem responded that "one hour of your pure study of Torah is more precious to me than 1000 Korbanot your son Shlomo will bring".

May you all be blessed with a wonderful qualitative life that is full with joy and blessing.

Shabbat Shalom  
Aaron Lankry



Zmanim by our Incredible Gabbi  
**EPHRAIM YUROWITZ**  
**TZVI BLECH** : Gabbai

NEW MINYANIM ADDED:

**EARLY MINYAN MINCHA FRIDAY**  
1:29, 2:00, 2:30, 3:00, 3:30

PLAG EREV SHABBOS 6:29

## SHABBOS ZMANIM

CANDLE LIGHTING	7:39PM
MINCHA <sup>ALEF TENT</sup>	7:00PM
MINCHA <sup>BAIS CHABAD</sup>	7:49PM
SHKIYA	7:57PM
SHACHRIS <sup>VASHKIN- DAF YOMI SHIUR</sup>	5:09AM
SHACHRIS <sup>ASHKENAZ 18 MAIN</sup>	8:00AM
SHACHRIS MAIN MINYAN <sup>18 TENT</sup>	9:15AM
SHACHRIS <sup>20 FORSHAY BAIS CHABAD</sup>	10:00AM
<b>NEW</b> SHACHRIS <sup>18 FORSHAY</sup>	<b>NEW</b> 10:15AM
PIRCHEI	2:00PM
PIRKEI AVOS PEREK DALED	
MINCHA SHALOSH SEUDOS	7:35PM
SHKIYA	7:58PM
MARRIV	8:38PM <sup>18 TENT</sup> , 8:43PM

## WEEKDAY ZMANIM

SHACHRIS

20 MINUTES BEFORE NEITZ

S 5:27 M 5:26 T 5:25 W 5:23 T 5:22 F 5:21

MINCHA & MARIV

12 MINUTES BEFORE PLAG

S 6:18 M 6:19 T 6:19 W 6:20 T 6:21

MINCHA & MARIV

12 MINUTES BEFORE SHKIA

S 7:46 M 7:47 T 7:48 W 7:49 T 7:50

**MAY 7 - MAY 12**

NEITZ IS 5:47 - 5:41

PELAG IS 6:30 - 6:33

SHKIA IS 7:58 - 8:02

MAGEN AVRAHAM

8:44 - 8:41 AM

GRA- BAAL HATANYA

9:20 - 9:17 AM

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RABBI COREN

PARSHAS EMOR

# Teaching by Example

Parsha Emor begins with the double expression of אמרת ואמר. Rashi quotes Chazal as saying that these words refer to the obligation of adult Kohanim to oversee the young Kohanim with regards to the Laws of Kehuna. Reb Moshe Z"l points out that this is a paradigm example of Chinuch--teaching the young. The familiar sefer חובות התלמידים explains that the word Chinuch really means to "inaugurate" someone or something in its true purpose and function. When we wish to train our kids to do something, we should make sure we're not forcing them to undertake the action but rather we are helping them to ease into its performance in a pleasurable manner so the enjoyment continues long after. Shlomo Hamelech teaches us שונן על פי חינוך דרכו גם כי יוקין לא יסור ממנו. Chinuch is not about preaching and coercing but rather about instructing and inspiring. I once heard a pshat in the words that Rashi quotes here: להזהיר גדולים על הקטנים. The word להזהיר can be translated as creating light which is actually the name of the great Kabbalistic work--the Zohar. Aside from the differences between teaching and preaching, it's crucial to keep in mind how much more powerful it is to educate by example even without spoken words, than to scream and shout or even to speak softly, which is actually the essence of the אמירה (See Rashi in Parshas Yisro on the words לבית אמור where Rashi explains that the word אמור is a word voiced with a soft tongue.)

I am reminded of a story of a father, we'll call him Yosef, who was very proud and excited to share with his Rabbi on Shabbas the fact that his 3-year old boy had been taking black Lego pieces and putting them on his head pretending he was doning Tefilin. The father was sure that his son was destined for greatness as this was surely a sign of early aspirations. The Rabbi looked at his dear congregant and told him, "Yosef, you really must start davening during the week in shul and not at home. Our children pick up so much from what we do and say and there is no better way to inspire our children than to do the actions ourselves that we want them to do." There are fathers that won't stop reminding their boys to open up a Gemara on Shabbas yet they themselves are busy drinking

and sleeping all day. This is definitely not an effective way to get anyone to learn. If the father really wants his son to learn and develop, he should find a chavrusa or open up a Gemara himself. Emulating a parent is one of the most effective educational guides and even if not seen immediately, the impressions gleaned are implanted in our children for eternity. Anyone that comes to our shul knows there are some designated parking spots for the handicapped and for specific persons. I thank Hashem that He has given me the opportunity to be part of such an amazing shul and for the designated parking spot that has my name on it which is definitely a gift. It certainly makes it easier to park since the lot is always full and it is difficult finding an empty space. Nevertheless, sometimes other holy souls feel the need to park in one of the designated spots. I decided to interview these dear souls to better understand why a holy Jew who follows the Torah and comes to speak to Hashem, make his requests and express his gratitude, parks in a spot that is not assigned to him and actually risks transgressing. According to Reb Chaim Kanievesky Z"l and other great poskim when a person behaves in this manner, his davening is not counted and all his words were considered levatala. When I have a few moments and the driver is still in his car, I approach him and try to understand his thought process. I hope one day to share a few recent 'explanations.' But for brevity's sake, I will say the following: I was watching a person parking in one of the designated spots with his young boy sitting in the car next to him. I was thinking how sad it was that this father was taking his son to shul to be inspired and instead of showing him middos and good values, he was teaching him that it's ok to ignore rules and take someone else's spot for the sake of a spiritual encounter. Our Parsha begins with Kohanim who are the prime examples of holy people. Let's try to make sure that we follow in the footsteps of the Kohanim and choose the right moves to inspire our children and insure that they grow to be holy people with holy internal middos that fit what the Jewish nation stands for. Have a great Shabbas



RABBI STEINFELD

# Doctor Kohen

In Vayikra 21:1 the torah teaches us that a kohen can not become tamei. The question one can ask is may a Kohen become a doctor? He may become tamei upon treating a very sick person. Another question is if there are two doctors one a Kohen and one isn't, may the Kohen treat a person on his deathbed or should he defer to the other doctor?

The Chasam Sofer in Yoreh Deah 338 says that we cannot forbid a Kohen from becoming a doctor. This is despite the fact that he may become tamei later on upon treating a person on his death bed. His psak is based on the Ramban in Meseches Shabbos that a Mitzva is only in the time the Mitzva is in effect therefore one can do a bris on Shabbos despite the fact that there is no hot water and subsequently they will need to cook water. At the time of the bris one need not make this cheshbon. So too a Kohen can become a doctor and not worry that in the future he may become tamei.

The Chasam Sofer then says that the Raya is not as clear as when it comes to a bris he has a mitzvah at that time to do the bris whereas a doctor does not have a mitzvah to become a doctor.

He brings another proof from the fact that one is not allowed to travel on a boat less than three days before Shabbos as he might be mechalel Shabbos. But in the case of a doctor when he learns how to become a doctor he need not worry that later on he might have to treat someone on his deathbed.

The Shevet Halevi in vol 2:164 says that a Kohen can join Hatzalah and one

does not need to worry that a while later he will become tamei.

Regarding the question of two doctors and one of them is a kohen The Shailos utshuvos Bais Yaakov 130 says it would be forbidden as it is only a safek if he will be able to save him. He brings proof from Tosfos question in Bava Metziva 114b how could Eliyahu Hanavi be mechayei meisim the son of Shunamis if he was a kohen? Tosfos answers that he was sure he would bring him back to life so we see if there is a safek then a kohen would be forbidden.

The Nachlas Tzvi in Yoreh Deah 370 argues and says that Tosfos did not require that Eliyahu Hanavi be sure that he would bring him back to life. Even if there was a small chance one has to do pikuach nefesh. It was just in that case where it was a great miracle of techiyas hameisim that he needed to be confident that he could bring him back. Tosfos in Nida 44b says that one could be mechalel Shabbos even on a goses that is despite the fact that the majority of gosesim die nevertheless even on a safek one has to do everything to save a life. The Chasam Sofer in Yoreh Deah 338 that a Kohen can do anything to save someone but in the event there is another doctor the kohen would be forbidden to go in. The Shevet Halevi vol3 164 agrees that if the doctors are both on the same level and they would use the same medicine, then the kohen should refrain from treating a goseis!

May we all be zocheh to never need doctors or Hatzalah!



RABBI REISMAN

## A Thought on Lag B'omer

Tuesday is Lag B'omer, Lag Ba'omer actually commemorates two things, Rav Shimon Bar Yochai's Yahrzeit, and the ending of the deaths of the Talmidei Rebbi Akiva. Actually I should mention first the Talmidei Rebbi Akiva because that's in the Gemara and then also what came later that we celebrate Rav Shimon Bar Yochai's Yahrzeit.

Let's think about what Lag Baomer means to each of these particular occasions. The story of Rav Shimon Bar Yochai is in Maseches Shabbos Daf 33b. A person should take out a Shabbos Gemara and take a look at the story of Rav Shimon Bar Yochai in the M'arah with his son Rav Eliezer and how they suffered, they struggled. Their skin came out, very painfully infected, their meals were very sparse and simple meals. For twelve years they stayed in the M'arah.

The Gemara relates how after the twelve years the Caesar from whom they were hiding had passed on and they left their cave. When they saw that there were Jews busy planting and plowing they couldn't take it, and wherever they looked they saw Jews involved in ordinary activities, it pained them and they caused damage with the pain that they felt. They understood that they had to go back to the M'arah, and they did. They went back for another year.

Now what's this about? The Gemara makes it clear that they misbehaved. When they went out, imagine after twelve years of Kedusha and Taharah, extraordinary Kedusha and Taharah they went out, and they saw things and looked at it the wrong way, they were wrong in the way they looked at it. How do I know they were wrong? The Gemara says they went back into the cave and they said the Mishpat for Reshaim in Gehenom is twelve months, so we will be in the cave for twelve months like going to Gehenom. Meaning they did something wrong.

The idea being that after being in the Shpitz Kedusha, the highest level of Kedusha in a cave learning Toras Hashem with zero Gashmius, you can't just run out and get involved in the world without a preparation, without some sort of a preparation to how this can have continuity. You have to take control of what happened or else it runs wild.

Rav Gedalya Schorr in the Or Gedalyahu on Pesach, on the Haggadah doesn't mention Rav Shimon Bar Yochai but he says exactly this, listen to what he says. He says that Klal Yisroel left Mitzrayim and they jumped 49 Madreigos in one shot. Why did it take 49 days to get to Matan Torah? So Rav Schorr says somebody who jumps many Madreigos is Chayov to sit and be Misboded and take control of that which he had achieved very rapidly.

Meaning to say that when a person has opportunity, and he takes the opportunity, to jump Madreigos, drastic change will not be permanent without a certain amount of Hisbodedus. And Rav Schorr says about Klal Yisroel going out of Mitzrayim during the Yimei Haomer, the same thing is about Rav Shimon Bar Yochai, of course on a much higher level on Rav Shimon

Bar Yochai's level, the same thing. He had made tremendous change, you can't just go out. It has to be something that's put together, that could be throttled. If you don't throttle energy it short circuits and it doesn't go anywhere. That was the idea of the Yemai Ha'omer in both instances. To step out and think about where you are before you go forward.

What about Rabbi Akiva and Lag B'omer? You have to realize. Rabbi Akiva had a Yeshiva with 24,000 Talmidim. Now that is a big Yeshiva by all accounts. I don't know if they had a food program but imagine preparing food for 24,000 Talmidim. 24,000, that is more than Lakewood and the Mir Yeshiva combined Kein Yirbu by them. It was a gigantic Yeshiva of Klal Yisrael and the Talmidim all died during the Yemai Ha'omer.

On Lag B'omer Rabbi Akiva took stock. He said something drastic happened. I can't just move forward and do it again the same way I did it before. He stopped and he thought and he started again on an entirely different path. His Yeshiva now had 5 Talmidim the best of Klal Yisrael. 5 Talmidim, that is a small Yeshiva. The smallest Yeshiva. There is not even a food program for 5 Talmidim. With 5 Talmidim he not only taught them Torah but he taught them the Middos, the Derech Eretz, the respect that they had to have for each other, and they became the greatest leaders in Klal Yisrael. They were the leaders of the next generation, the leaders of Shas Bavli. So you see, Rabbi Akiva also stopped, and thought and took stock.

The Pri Chadash asks a Kasha. If all of the Talmidim died by Lag B'omer so what does it mean that B'lag B'omer Pasku Lamus, that they stopped dying on Lag B'omer, they were all not alive anymore. What is the Simcha of Lag B'omer? What is the commemoration of Lag B'omer? Lag B'omer because they all died so the death had to stop at some point. The answer is that Lag B'omer is the time that Rabbi Akiva stopped and did what the Omer is about. He stopped and took stock and thought about it and decided how to move forward.

So the Omer is Yetzias Mitzrayim, its Rabbi Akiva, its Rabban Shimon Bar Yochai it is all one message in all 3 cases.

Wishing everybody a meaningful and wonderful Shabbos. Take a Shabbos Gemara on 33b to your Shabbos table and learn with whoever is there about the story of Rabban Shimon Bar Yochai in the M'arah (the cave). Even if they are not interested and even if they fall asleep if you just keep on learning it and then look around your house, I bet you have a Sefer or two that has Meforshim on Shabbos 33b. You might not have used them in a long time. Pull them out and take a look. 3 more days as Lag B'omer is next week. Make use of the opportunity. With that I wish one and all an absolutely wonderful Shabbos.

PARSHAS EMOR

## Only "Pure" Materials Allowed

על המנורה הטהורה יערוך את הנרות, לפניו" 24:4  
ד' תמיד

"On the pure Menorah he shall arrange the lamps, before Hashem, continually." Rashi explains that the reason that the Torah calls the Menorah, "הטהורה" the pure one, is because it was made of pure gold. We need to understand this, for what is the great significance that the Menorah was made of pure gold, so much so, that we call it the מנורה הטהורה?

Rashi explains that the reason that the Torah calls the Menorah, "הטהורה" the pure one, is because it was made of pure gold. We need to understand this, for what is the great significance in that the Menorah was made of pure gold, so much so, that we call it the מנורה הטהורה? The Menorah is a Siman to Limud HaTorah, as the Gemara in Bava Basra 25b says: Rebbe Yitzchok said that if you want to become wise, you should face south when Davening Shemoneh Esrei, and one who wants to become wealthy should face north when Davening Shemoneh Esrei. The way to remember this is that in the Mikdash, the Shulchan, which symbolized blessing and abundance, was in the north, while the Menorah, which symbolized the light of wisdom, was in the south of the Mikdash. The Menorah represented Limud HaTorah. (קול) (ר)

The Menorah being made of gold was not completely necessary, and if needed, the Menorah was able to be made out of other materials, as the Gemara in Menochos 28b says that if you do not have gold, the Menorah could be made out of silver, copper, iron, tin, or lead. Rebbe Yose the son of Rebbe Yehudah said that it could even be made out of wood. The Gemara a little further on says that the Chashmona'im formed the Menorah from spits of iron, covered with tin. When they became a little wealthier, they formed it from silver, and when they became even wealthier, they formed it from gold. We see clearly, that while it was certainly a greater Kovod for the Menorah to be made out of gold, when Klal Yisroel were unable to, they were able to make it from other materials. While it being gold was not mandatory, what was mandatory was that whatever of the permitted materials they would use, it

needed to be "טהור" – pure. Similarly, the oil in the Menorah needed to be pure, without anything mixed into it. We learn from this that Torah must not be mixed with other things – Torah must be pure. The Torah must be learned for the proper reasons, and those giving over the Torah Hakdosha must give it over in a pure and clear way.

The Mishna in Avos 3:17 says, "אין קמח" אם אין קמח – if there is no bread (money) there is no Torah. The Gemara in Brochos 57b says, "There are three things which give a person comfort, and they are: A beautiful place to live, a beautiful wife, and beautiful vessels." However, even the Gashmiyos that one has must be for the sake of Ruchniyos. When one eats, he should have in mind that he is eating so that he can have the strength to learn Torah and serve Hakodosh Boruch Hu. Thus, in all the places of the Torah, it mentions the Shulchan before the Menorah, for in order to be Matzliach with the Torah, one needs to have קמח, bread, sustenance. One needs to first ensure that his body is taken care of and healthy, so that he could toil in Torah properly and serve Hakodosh Boruch Hu in the most optimal manner. One should be in a nice place, so that he can have the peace of mind to truly concentrate on the Torah. However, here the Torah switches the order to tell us one caveat to the rule that one needs to have bread first, and that is that one must know that the Torah is the Ikar, the main thing. All of one's pursuits in Gashmiyos must be for the sake of Ruchniyos.

The Menorah represents the Torah Hakdosha. While the Menorah did not necessarily need to be made out of gold, whatever material it was made from needed to be pure – exclusively that material, without mixing any other material with it. This was an integral part of the Menorah, that it was pure. This alludes to us that the Torah Hakdosha must always be pure. The Talmidei Chachomim build spiritual worlds through their pure Torah, and we must seek to emulate it. When it comes to learning Torah, we must put aside all else. Our focus must be solely on the Torah Hakdosha, for the sake of the Torah Hakdosha. May we be Zoche to toil in true Limud HaTorah, in the Torah Hakdosha, with the proper purity.



RABBI BEN ZION SNEH

**פרשת אמור** תארו לעצמכם, שיש לכם חשבון בנק המזכה אתכם בכל בוקר בסכום של 86,400 דולרים. היתרה אינה משתנה או עוברת מיום ליום שאחרי. בכל לילה, כל סכום שלא הוצאתם במשך היום נמחק – והחשבון שלכם חוזר לסכום של 86,400 דולרים. מה הייתם עושים עם הכסף? כמוכן, מוציאים כל דולר. אבל האמת היא, שלכל אחד מאיתנו יש בנק כזה.

שמו הוא בנק הזמן. בכל בוקר אנו מקבלים במתנה 86,400 שניות. בכל לילה מה שלא נוצל כדי לעשות טוב, יורד לטמיון. היתרה אינה עוברת ליום שלמחרת וגם אי אפשר להיכנס למינוס. אם לא השתמשתם במה שהיה בחשבון – ההפסד כולו שלכם. אי אפשר לחזור לאחור, אי אפשר למשוך על חשבון מחר. מוכרחים לחיות בהווה, על חשבון הזמן שניתן לנו.

נקודה למחשבה, העריכו את הזמן שלכם, התמקדו והפיקו ממנו את מירב הנתונה, האהבה והחמלה. חלקו את הזמנים היפים שלכם עם האנשים האהובים עליכם, והזכרונות ימשיכו לחיות במשך שנים רבות. חיו עם הזמן את היום את הרגע וזכרו, הזמן אינו ממתין לשום אדם, האתמול הוא היסטוריה והמחר אינו ידוע. פרשת השבוע מתמקדת בזמן. בזמן יש משמעות ומעגליות: כל שבעה ימים יש שבת, כל חודש מתחיל חודש חדש, בכל שנה מתחילה שנה חדשה, עונות השנה חוזרות על עצמן וכיוצא בזה. נותני שקוראים להם חגים ומועדים.

הפרשה עוסקת בהרחבה בנקודות האלה לאורך הזמן: ויאלה מועדי ה' מקראי קודש אשר תקראו אותם במועדים. "ושננתם לבניך ודברתם בם בשבתך בביתך ובלכתך בדרך ובשכרך ובקומך. המועדים האלו הם נקודות ציון בזמן, שנמצאות גם ביומן ומאפשרות לנו לעצור, להתבונן, לספר ולחבר את העבר, העתיד והווה למורשת, לשורשים ולמסורת שעוברת מדור לדור ואנו מתבקשים להפוך את החגים האלה לייחוקת עולם לדורותיכם בכל מושבותיכם". והזמן לא חוזר בדיוק באותה צורה. אנחנו צועדים בתוך הזמן, וכל פעם מגיעים ליתחנה אחרת עם אופי מיוחד. אך בכל שנה הזמן לא חוזר בדיוק באותה צורה.

### FOCUS ON WHAT YOU CAN DO

Someone once told the Rebbe that her father was down, that after his stroke he cannot go to his shiurim, cannot go to

shul to daven with a minyan, cannot make packages for families for Shabbos... The Rebbe told her, tell your father to think about things he CAN DO. Not about things he cannot do.

==== As told by Dovid Kaplan.

UFARATZTA







RABBI YY JACOBSON

# Life as a Wedding: The Meaning of Lag B'Omer

*The finite as a portal to the infinite.*

Lag B'Omer, the thirty-third day of the Omer that links Passover to Shavuot, is the anniversary of the passing of one of the greatest sages and spiritual giants in Jewish history, Rabbi Shimon bar Yochai.

Rabbi Shimon, who lived in Israel under Roman occupation around 165 CE (approximately one hundred years after the destruction of the Second Temple in 70 C.E.), was an extraordinary scholar and author of the Zohar, the chief work of Kabbalah. He was responsible for revealing to the world the wisdom of the Kabbalah, initiating a new era in the development and exposure of Jewish mysticism. The most significant revelation came about on the day of Rabbi Shimon's passing, on which he expounded for many hours on the most intimate secrets of the divine wisdom. That day was 18 Iyar, or Lag B'Omer.

Before his passing, Rabbi Shimon instructed his disciples to observe his *yahrzeit* (the day of his death) as a time of joy and festivity, since the day of a person's death marks the culminating point of all that he achieved in the course of his life on earth. Since then, Jews the world over, especially at his resting place in Meron, Israel, celebrate this day with singing, dancing, kindling fires, Torah study, parades and field trips for children, and an increase in acts of love and unity.

## A Wedding?

Yet there is something strange about this day: In many Jewish works it is called "*Helulah D'Rashbi*" – the "wedding" anniversary of Rabbi Shimon bar Yochai. Never before has a *yahrzeit* been described as a "*helulah*," a wedding, and for good reason: death and marriage are diametrically opposed. Death terminates marriage. Why would a *yahrzeit*, a day of passing, be called a "wedding?" And why, from all *yahrzeits*, was it Rabbi Shimon bar Yochai's which first received the title of *hilulah* – wedding?

The Talmud makes the following observation:

The sage Shmuel said to his student Rabbi Yehudah: "Sharp one! Grab and eat, grab and drink! The world that we are passing through is like a wedding." (*Eiruvin 54a*)

Obviously, the great Talmudic sage Shmuel was not training his disciple Rabbi Yehudah for a career in gluttony! What then was he telling him? The 11th century French Talmudic commentator, Rashi, explains:

Shmuel's point was to warn his student not to wait until tomorrow to use his money, because a person has no assurance that he will be alive tomorrow to enjoy his money. Life is similar to a wedding which swiftly passes.

Sometimes, in our eagerness to think about the long-term – which is important – we forget that life is happening now and we must live in the moment. Some people will never allow themselves to enjoy their wealth and success today because there is always a "tomorrow" they have to save up for. But life is short, and you can't delay your happiness till tomorrow. John Lennon was the not the first to understand that "Life is what happens to you while you're busy making other plans."

This is sound advice. But to illustrate the brevity of life, why does Shmuel give the example of a wedding? There are other events that pass swiftly. Shmuel could have said, "The world that we are passing through is like a day," or "like a dream," or "like a thunderstorm," or "like a sun shower." Why the example of a wedding to describe a fleeting experience?

Clearly, Shmuel is conveying a deeper message to his student than "life is short, live today!" The example of the wedding is essential to the understanding of the message.

## The Marriage Paradox

At the heart of marriage lays a paradox.

Marriage by definition is a restrictive experience. As long as you are a bachelor you can dance to your own beat. Once married you must dance to two beats – and sometimes they are divergent or conflicting.

Compromise becomes the name of the game. People are different. Men and women are very different. Living together as a husband and wife requires each to "reconfigure" the database of his or her psyche, to create space for a new "program" or, more accurately, a new "hard drive." The self must create space for the other. Every marriage requires some form of self-abnegation.

Yet, on the other hand, marriage elevates the self to infinite heights. It is not only that through marriage one can reach his or her deepest potential; the mating of opposite genders makes reproduction possible.

All of us are mortal. Our creations, too,

are mortal. Even our most impressive creations – the Roman Empire, Bear Sterns, Lehman's Brothers – are subject to decline and death. There is only one exception: children. They outlive us, and their children outlive them. Your children constitute your link to eternity. We are here today because thousands of years ago our great great grandparents married and had children. Those ancestors are long gone; their creations are long gone; their homes, towns and cities have long crumbled. But we are here. And they are here today through us.

**Through this very restricted process, you become limitless and infinite.**

When you spend an extra three hours at the office building your company, you are investing in something which is at best temporary. When you spend that time with your children – reading them a story, playing a game with them, shmoozing with them, bonding with them, listening to them, validating their emotions and showering them with love and wisdom – you are investing in eternity.

This is the paradox of marriage: The marital relationship will impose limitations on your life. It will require of each party to tame his or her limitless self-expression. When a couple decides to have children, these limitations become even more dramatic. Life revolves not around your desires but your children's needs. Yet, in this very process, you become limitless and infinite. If you want to remain free and unrestricted in your life, unbound and unlimited, you ensure your finitude. Your life ultimately comes to an end. Conversely, by choosing to become finite you become infinite; by choosing to become limited, through entering into a relationship and building a family, you access infinity and achieve eternity.

[This, of course, is not limited only to those who marry or have children. Even those who for whatever reason could not get married, or have children, their lives are enshrined in eternity, as we will explain below.]

## The Ultimate Marriage

This paradox constitutes the very essence of life.

Our marriage to our spouse is essentially our second marriage. All of us experience a first marriage at the moment of birth – when our souls "marry" our bodies and they

“move in” together for life. The soul and the body are two opposites: one is physical and concrete; the other is spiritual and sublime. One enjoys material pleasure; the other pines for transcendence. One craves for self-gratification; the other yearns for truth. One sees the objective of life as meeting its needs and cravings; the other – to become one with God.

The Midrash (Midrash Rabah Kohelet) presents this parable:

A farmer once married a princess and she moved to the farm. He was a nice man and treated her respectfully. The first day he taught her how to milk the cows; the second day – how to feed the mules; the third day – how to clean the horses. He gave her a comfortable bed near the stable, teaching her about the crow of the rooster that will awake her.

Yet his wife was miserable.

He consulted his father-in-law, the king. “I am trying so hard to satisfy your daughter; to no avail. She is miserable. What I’m I to do?”

The king responded: “You’re a fine and sincere young man. But you must understand: your wife grew in up in royalty; the life of the farm does not speak to her heart. You can’t offer her what she needs because you have no concept that it exists.”

This is a parable of the soul who married the body. The body is the peasant farmer, offering us Wall Street and condominiums and success and power and all other kinds of potatoes and tomatoes. Most of us live thinking that we are the peasant. That is why however much we have it is never enough. Because we are feeding ourselves the wrong thing. It can be everything the peasant has ever dreamed of, but it’s still not enough because the princess has been raised on finer stuff.

Our bodies are nice and polite. They mean well. Our soul is anxious, so the body tells our souls: wait till you see what’s for breakfast. The body gives the soul the most delicious breakfast, lunch and dinner. But, alas, we still have a void; the void of a soul yearning for something more.

So the body takes the soul on expensive cruises and fancy vacations, builds for it fancy homes and marvelous cars, label design clothing, and precious jewelry. But the soul still feels a void. Because the soul grew up in royalty; the delights of the “farm” will not do the trick. The soul needs transcendence; it is searching for the Divine.

**Only in this world, through its arduous work within and with the body, can the soul attain great spiritual heights.**

As the soul enters into a body for a lifelong “marriage,” its self-expression becomes severely limited, as it is living with a partner

who does not even understand its language. And unlike marriage where you can run away from your husband for a few hours to get some fresh air, the soul can never leave the body to take a break; it remains confined within the body. Sometimes, like in a marriage, the soul is completely ignored.

Yet, just as in a physical marriage that it is only as a result of the unity between man and woman that they can achieve eternity, so it is with the marriage of soul and body. It is only in this world, while clothed in the body, that the soul can transcend itself and reach heights completely impossible to attain if it would remain “single” in heaven. Only in this world, through its arduous work within and with the body, can the soul fulfill God’s mitzvot – the “children” created by the marriage of body and soul – through which it connects to God Himself. And it is only on earth that we can experience transformation, completely going out of our fixed limitations and becoming a new person.

In heaven, we are what we are. In earth, we can transform ourselves. An addict can experience recovery; an obnoxious self-centered man can become noble and kind; a crooked liar can become an honest human being. In this world, we can make real changes. True growth is possible.

### **Life on Earth is a Wedding**

We can, at last, appreciate what Shmuel said to his student Rabbi Yehudah: “Sharp one! Grab and eat, grab and drink! The world that we are passing through is like a wedding.”

A wedding may seem like a limiting experience, yet it is precisely this limitation which allows you to reach your deepest potential, and what is more, lifts you on the wings of eternity. The same is true, suggested the Talmudic sage, concerning the world we pass through. Our journeys in this world may seem so restrictive and stressful, filled with agony, hardships and pain. Even the most blessed life is filled with the anxiety of the soul confined in a material body. Yet you have to know, said the sage Shmuel, that it is through the work in this world that the soul reaches its deepest potential and experiences radical, infinite and eternal growth. It is our journey here on earth that affords us the opportunity, each moment, to become completely one with God through performing His mitzvot and saturating the cosmos with His Torah, which can only happen in this world.

### **This world is like a wedding – it is a portal to infinity.**

Hence, “Grab and eat! Grab and drink!” Seize the moment! Grab every mitzvah that you can do in this world. Cherish every moment you have. Because what may look like a single fleeting and insignificant moment to you, is really like a wedding, it is a gateway to the deepest of the deep and the holiest of the holy.

Every moment spent in this world bringing holiness and goodness into our world, carries within it the most awesome potential – the potential to fulfill God’s plan and become One with His essence.

This world, and every moment we enjoy in it, is like a wedding – it is a portal to infinity. Grab every opportunity to study Torah, to observe mitzvot, to serve God, to do a favor to another person, because you can’t do any of this in heaven’s paradise.

### **The Gift of Kabbalah**

This is why it was the *yahrzeit* of Rabbi Shimon bar Yochai that came to be defined as “*hilula*,” as a wedding. For he was the one who gave the Jewish world the gift of Kabbalah, the study of Jewish mysticism and spirituality. What is Kabbalah?

At the surface, Judaism is all about structure – performing fixed laws at certain times, places, in certain ways. Each mitzvah has its detailed, fixed structure etched in stone. Halacha, Jewish law, is restrictive: it obliges the Jew to do many things and to abstain from many others, and there are fixed times for everything. Came Kabbalah and revealed how each of these mitzvot is a portal to infinity, to transcend structure and touch the Divine. Kabbalah focus extensively on the inner meaning of every aspect and detail of Jewish law and observance, demonstrating its cosmic significance and spiritual Divine power.

The teachings of Kabbalah explain at length the significance and purpose of every moment in this world; the sacred quality of the body; the mystery of every physical phenomenon; the depth and holiness of every creature in this world. Rabbi Shimon, in other words, is the one who showed us that life is a “wedding” – a place where limitations are opportunities for infinity.

The final day of a person’s earthly life says the mystics, marks the point at which “all his deeds, teachings and work” achieve their culminating perfection and the zenith of their impact upon our lives. So each *Lag B’Omer*, we celebrate *Rabbi Shimon’s life* and the revelation of the esoteric soul of Torah. We dance with the soul who showed us how life was a wedding, an opportunity to merge paradoxes and connect to eternity.

*This essay is dedicated in loving memory of Chaya Mushka bas Menachem Mendel, whose short life was like the “wedding” described in this essay*

*This essay is based on a discourse by Rabbi Dov Ber, the Miteler Rebbe (1773-1827), Maamari Admur Haemtzei Vayikra vol. 2 Maamar Lehavin Einyan Helulah D’Rashbi. As well as on the discourses with the same beginning of the year 5654 (1894) by the Rebbe Rashab, and the above discourse by the Lubavitcher Rebbe from the years 5730 (1970), 5737 (1977) and Maamar Shabbos Vayeitzei, 10 Kislev 5746 (1985), published in Sefer Hamaamarim Melukat.*



RABBI NACHUM SCHEINER  
ROSH KOLLEL

## Taanios Behab – the MiShebeirach

### Part III

This week there are many shuls that recite special selichos of ביה"ב. I would, therefore, like to discuss some of the relevant sources and customs for these special days of ביה"ב. The Shulchan Aruch (O"C 492) writes that some have the custom to fast on ביה"ב, Monday, Thursday, and Monday, shortly after Pesach and Sukkos. Although there are not many that still have this custom, there are many places that recite selichos on these days.

There are a number of reasons for fasting and reciting selichos:

**1. Improper interaction between men and women:**

The Gemara in Kiddushin 81a tells us that during the days of yom tov, everyone – men and women – gathered to hear the special shiurim and speeches in honor of the yom tov. This could bring to improper interaction between the members of the opposite gender, and cause people to come to sin. Tosfos mentions that this is a possible reason for the custom of fasting after Pesach and Sukkos. According to this reason, it may only apply to someone who actually sinned.

**2. Days of merriment can cause sin:** The Tur (Siman 492) writes that the custom of fasting is something we can trace back to Ivov. When there is much merriment and rejoicing, there is a possibility that one became lax in his mitzvah performance and we, therefore, fast after Pesach and Sukkos

According to this understanding, it is the general lightness of the time that can cause people to sin. Additionally, the concern is about sins in general – not any specific aveira.

**3. A concern that one did not keep the laws properly:**

The Be'ir Heitev adds that, on yom tov and chol hamoed in particular, there is a concern that one did not keep the laws properly. This is because there are some melachos that are allowed on yom tov, but it must fit the halachic criteria to be allowed. On Chol Hamo'ed, as well, although there are many things that are allowed, people do not know properly know the halachic parameters and may do something forbidden. According to this reason, it is a more general concern and is applicable for all people.

**4. Change of weather :**The Levush (592:1) mentions another reason. This is not for simply for the past sins,

but rather for the future. Since this is the change of seasons – after Sukkos it is the beginning of the cold climate of the winter, and after Pesach, the heat of the summer – which is often a cause of illness. An ounce of prevention is worth a pound of cure, so we therefore pray or fast to prevent any sicknesses.

**5. For rain :**The Eliyahu Raba (592:2) writes that since these are the times of growth and harvest, respectively, it is an extremely important time to ask for rain.

**Summary:**Reasons for fasting and reciting selichos:

1. Improper interaction between men and women
2. Days of merriment can cause sin:
3. A concern that one did not keep the laws properly
4. Change of weather
5. For rain

Comments and questions are welcome and can be sent to:

[RabbiScheiner@18forshay.com](mailto:RabbiScheiner@18forshay.com).

To receive updates of upcoming shiurim, to receive a link to current shiurim, or to access archived shiurim, please send a request to: [Secretary@18forshay.com](mailto:Secretary@18forshay.com), or follow the prompts on our website [18Forshay.com](http://18Forshay.com).

Recorded shiurim are also available on CD at the shul – 18 Forshay Main Lobby.

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ROSH KOLLEL &  
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SPEAKERS

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• Mishna Yomis  
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• ZERA SHIMSHON  
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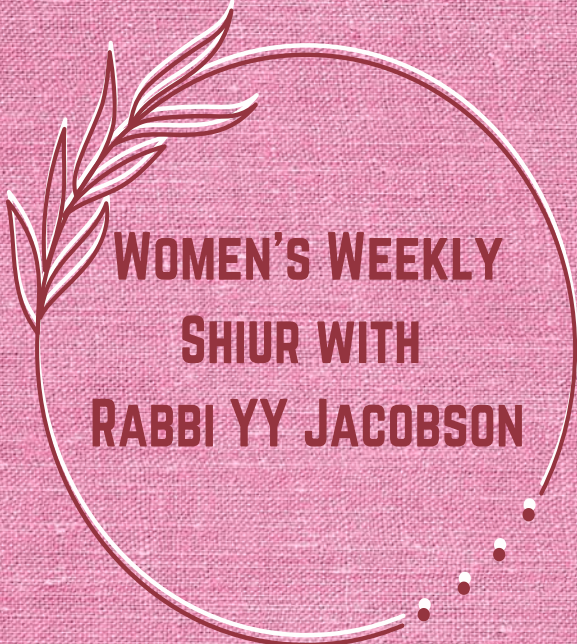
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RABBI EFREM GOLDBERG

## LAG B'OMER & GRATITUDE

Years ago, someone gave me a Tony Robbins cd to listen to. I was excited to hear what one of the most inspirational people of modern times would have to say and how it could change my life for the better. He started his talk by saying that he has the secret to both happiness and success. If you follow his advice and begin each and every day of your life exactly as he prescribes, he can all but guarantee you will find yourself both happier, and achieving your goals and dreams.

I was very eager to hear what his secret is.

What Tony Robbins said is correct, but for me, and for you, and for Jewish 3-year-olds around the world, it was nothing new. The secret to happiness and to achieving success, he said, is to start every day of your life by expressing gratitude. As soon as you wake up, before doing anything else, say thank you. Be grateful and appreciative for being alive, having a roof over your head, having your health if you are lucky, your family, etc.

He continued that it isn't enough to think appreciatively, but you need to start your day by verbalizing and actually saying thank you out loud. If you wake up with an attitude of gratitude, the rest of your day is guaranteed to be successful and happy.

What Tony Robbins is teaching in the 21st century, Judaism has taught since its inception thousands of years ago. From an early age, we teach our children to wake up saying Modeh ani lefanecha, I am grateful to you God for the fact that I woke up, that I am alive to see another day, for the wonderful blessings in my life and for my relationship with You. It has been inculcated within us from our youth that we don't wake up feeling entitled, deserving and demanding. Rather, we wake up with a deep and profound sense of gratitude, appreciation and thanks.

In my experience, Tony Robbins is right. How we start our day has an incredible impact on how the rest of it will go. This week we will celebrate Lag B'Omer, the 33rd day of the Omer. Each day of the Omer is characterized by another kabbalistic attribute. Lag B'Omer is Hod sh'b'hod, the glory of glory, reflecting our appreciation of God's greatness and glory. The Hebrew word hod can be understood as coming from the same word as hodu, or modeh, meaning thanks. Lag B'Omer is a day characterized as "thankfulness within thankfulness," or a day to celebrate gratitude.

Lag B'Omer is a day characterized as "thankfulness within thankfulness," or a day to celebrate gratitude.

The Chassam Sofer, Rav Moshe Sofer says that the miraculous manna that fell from Heaven began to descend on Lag B'Omer. On the first day, the manna was undoubtedly greeted with great enthusiasm and appreciation, but as time went on and there was an increasing expectation the heavenly bread would descend, it became much easier to take it for granted and to forget to be appreciative for it at all. Therefore Lag B'Omer is a

time that we identify and say thank you for all of the blessings that regularly descend into our lives, but unfortunately, like the manna, that we take for granted.

It is so easy to fall into a sense of entitlement and to forget to be grateful. Why should I thank my children's teachers? They're just doing their job. Why should I be so appreciative to the waiter, or the custodian, or the stewardess? Isn't that what they are supposed to do? When was the last time we said thank you to whomever cleans our dirty laundry? Do we express gratitude regularly to our spouse who shops, cooks dinner, or who worked all day to pay for dinner, or in some cases did both?

As we celebrate Lag B'Omer, let's not just say modeh ani in the morning and then quickly transition to feelings of entitlement. Let's remember to say thank you to the people who do extraordinary things in our lives. But even more importantly, let's especially express gratitude to the people who do the ordinary things that make our lives so filled with blessing.



### BAIS MEDRASH OHR CHAIM

As yeshiva bochrin worldwide return to their respective institutions, Scheiners Shul in Monsey has also commenced its Zman. The Night Kollel, which is currently studying Hilchos Mezuzah, is once again filled with energetic and dedicated minds who take time out of their busy schedules for Torah study. R' Nachum Scheiner, the Rosh Hakollel, has appointed Rav Zevi Hammelburger as the coordinator of the Kollel. Rav Zevi Hammelburger, who also coordinates the popular Yeshiva Bein Hazmanim program at Scheiners during Bein Hazmanim, has taken on the Night Kollel after its great success. Meanwhile, the Kollel Boker is currently focused on learning Maseches Taanis, and Reb Yoseph Fried continues to serve as its coordinator.

Other Shiurim at BMOC have also resumed, including Rabbi YY Jacobson's biweekly Chasidus shiur and his Tuesday morning Ladies Shiur. For a complete list and schedule of all Shiurim at 18 Forshay, please visit their website at [www.18forshay.com](http://www.18forshay.com). You won't be disappointed!

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# JOKES

## SHUL RESTORATION PROJECT

There was a tradesman, a painter named Jack, who was very interested in making a dollar where he could. So he often would thin down his paint to make it go a wee bit further. As it happened, he got away with this for some time. Eventually the local Shul decided to do a big restoration project. Jack put in a painting bid and, because his price was so competitive, he got the job. And so he started, erecting the trestles and putting up the planks, and buying the paint and thinning it down with turpentine. Jack was up on the scaffolding, painting away, the job nearly done, when suddenly there was a powerful clap of thunder. The sky opened and the rain poured down, washing the thin paint from all over the shul and knocking Jack off the scaffold to land on the lawn. Jack was no fool. He knew this was a judgment from the Almighty, so he fell on his knees and cried, "Oh, Lord Forgive me! What should I do?" And from the thunder, a mighty Voice spoke, "Repaint! Repaint! And thin no more!"

## OBVIOUSLY INEBRIATED?

A Highway Patrolman waited outside a popular bar, hoping for a bust.

At closing time everyone come out and he spotted his potential quarry. The man was so obviously inebriated that he could barely walk. He stumbled around the parking lot for a few minutes, looking for his car.

After trying his keys on five other cars, he finally found his own vehicle. He sat in the car a good ten minutes, as the other patrons

left. He turned his lights on, then off, wipers on, then off. He started to pull forward into the grass, then stopped. Finally, when he was the last car, he pulled out onto the road and started to drive away.

The patrolman, waiting for this, turned on his lights and pulled the man over. He administered the breathalyzer test, and to his great surprise, the man blew a 0.00.

The patrolman was dumbfounded. "This equipment must be broken!" he exclaimed.

"I doubt it," said the man, "Tonight I am the designated decoy!"

## POPULAR BUMPER STICKERS (OR THEY SHOULD BE)

"Women who seek to be equal to men lack ambition."

"It's as BAD as you think, and they ARE out to get you."

"I Brake For No Apparent Reason."

"Few women admit their age, Few men act it! "

"I don't suffer from insanity, I enjoy every minute of it!"

## SUCCESS

Someone once told me, "GO FOR BROKE!"

I'm happy to report that I succeeded.

## TOO MANY ROACHES

Health inspector: "I'm afraid you have too many roaches in here."

Restaurant owner: "How many am I allowed?"

## THE TEST

Two young engineers applied for a single position at a computer company.

They both had the same qualifications. In order to determine which individual to hire, the applicants were asked to take a test by the Department manager.

Upon completion of the test, both men missed only one of the questions.

The manager went to the first applicant and said, "Thank you for your interest, but we've decided to give the job to the other applicant."

"And why would you be doing that? We both got 9 questions correct," asked the rejected applicant.

"We have based our decision not on the correct answers, but on the question you missed," said the Department manager.

"And just how would one incorrect answer be better than the other?" the rejected applicant inquired.

"Simple," said the Department manager, "Your fellow applicant put down on question #5, 'I don't know.' You put down, 'Neither do I.'"

## CHICKEN GUN

Scientists at Rolls Royce built a gun specifically to launch dead chickens at the windshields of airliners and military jets all travelling at maximum velocity. The idea was to simulate the frequent incidents of collisions with airborne fowl to test the strength of the windshields.

American engineers heard about the gun and were eager to test it on the windshields of their new high speed trains. Arrangements were made, and a gun was sent to the American engineers.

When the gun was fired, the engineers stood shocked as the chicken hurled out of the barrel, crashed into the shatterproof shield, smashed it to smithereens, blasted through the control console, snapped the engineer's back-rest in two and embedded itself in the back wall of the cabin like an arrow shot from a bow..

The horrified engineers sent Rolls Royce the disastrous results of the experiment, along with the designs of the windshield and begged the British scientists for suggestions.

Rolls Royce responded with a one-line memo:

Defrost the chicken..

## BICYCLE SAFETY

I've started wearing a bike helmet, cause I find safety important. Now people stare and make fun of me. I'll never go to that spinning class again.

ESTD 2019



MEATWORKS  
EAT ART

# Meatboards



Taster  
8 3/4" x 12"



Sharing  
9 1/2" x 13 1/4"



Family Board  
9" x 15"



The Host  
12" x 16"



Let's Party  
15" x 15"





# This way to a Chinuch that really pays off



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R' Yossi Fried

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