

ACTION IS THE MAIN THING

(HaMa'ase Hu Hoiker)

Directives of the Rebbe MH" M

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The Month of Iyar

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SFIRAS HA'OMER

- 1) During *sfira* we do not say the *sh'hechyanu* blessing on a new fruit, except on Shabbos and Lag B'Omer. However, those who have the custom to say the blessing during *sfira*, should certainly not be stopped, for this is their custom. On the contrary, let them continue to make the blessing.
- 2) During *sfira* there are special abilities granted to fix one's *midos* (emotional attributes) and all matters that require correction, especially in the matter of "they did not conduct themselves with respect one to the other," by discussing the issues at hand with others, in peace and friendship, and actually coming to a resolution.
- 3) The wording is "*nohagu kavod zeh la'zeh*" (conduct themselves with respect one to the other), which alludes to this becoming a *minhag* (custom), emphasizing the concept of habit-forming. That is, *ahavas Yisroel* should become a regular custom requiring no effort.
- 4) "*Nohagu*" is also from the root meaning "*manhig*" (leader). This teaches us that everyone should become a leader in everything having to do with *ahavas* and *achdus*

Yisroel, to influence everyone he has a connection with so that they to treat others with respect.

FASTING: MONDAY, THURSDAY, MONDAY

Those who fast Monday, Thursday, Monday after Pesach, may they be blessed, should continue with their good custom, especially since it would be a question of *hataras nedarim* (annulling a vow), and one should not annul a vow except for some need, etc., such as weakness in one's health, *ch'v*.

Those who do not fast Monday, Thursday, Monday still benefit from the special quality of these days, which are auspicious days. Therefore, these days should be utilized to increase in all matters of Torah and *mitzvos*, Torah, *avoda* (*tefilla*) and *gmillus chassadim* (which is the custom during a fast), adding to what one usually does.

PESACH SHEINI

1) It is important to ensure that everyone knows about taking advantage of Pesach Sheini, a day that gives us the ability to correct all matters of *avoda* (Divine service) in Torah and *mitzvos*, including correcting that which is lacking.

2) This power of Pesach Sheini to correct and make up for the past (in addition to the recent past, i.e. days, weeks, months, the past year) also pertains to one's entire past, since the time of *bar mitzva*.

3) ...and even prior to the *bar mitzva* (as the Alter Rebbe writes in his Shulchan Aruch). Indeed we find a number of stories about *gedolei Yisroel* who even corrected matters that occurred before the age of understanding, even back to the age of nursing, and the beginning of the nursing period, and back to the moment when they arrived in this world.

4) One should also try to correct and make up for a lack in that which could have been done in a more perfect fashion. With just a superficial glance, certainly everyone will conclude that they could have done a number of things better than they did.

5) This evaluation should apply to one's *avoda* with oneself as well as working with others, starting with the family, and even after many years, when one's sons and daughters are past the age of *chinuch* (which is until age 24), and they themselves have children.

6) All this applies especially to teachers and counselors, *mashpiim*, *rabbanim*, etc. with regards to their students who have already grown up and who themselves have become educators. One can find ways to add to and perfect the influence that should have been there in earlier years.

7) All this applies to children as well. It is easy to explain to them that certain areas could have been better, so that on their own they will correct and make up for it in an

even greater measure, to the point of asking, "why should we lose out?" from attaining an even greater perfection.

8) This directive about correcting and perfecting things of the past must also (and primarily) apply to *ahavas Yisroel* (the love of a fellow Jew). And it is necessary to even further increase in *ahavas Yisroel* and *achdus Yisroel* in one's daily life.

9) Effort should be made to inspire others about this (at first) in a public forum so that people will encourage each other regarding *ahavas* and *achdus Yisroel*.

10) A special *farbrengen* should be held (during and around the special days between Pesach Sheini and Lag B'Omer) wherein words of inspiration should be spoken concerning correcting and perfecting all areas of *avoda*. This, of course, should be done with simcha at a *farbrengen*.

LAG B'OMER

Try to see to it that Lag B'Omer, Rabbi Shimon bar Yochai's day of rejoicing, is celebrated as a joyous day by all Jews wherever they may be (in the Diaspora, and certainly in Eretz Yisroel) by arranging festivities and parades, etc., in which men and women (separately, with the utmost *tznius*, of course) and children participate.

Especially regarding the children, the Jewish custom (which is Torah) from long ago is that on Lag B'Omer the children study only half or a third of the day and then go out to play. By doing this their desire to learn Torah is increased (after Lag B'Omer, and by way of preparation, also before it) knowing that the Rashbi represents "*Toraso umnaso*" (Torah study was his sole occupation).

At the parades, the children (and the adults) should be told about the Rashbi, etc., and they should be inspired to add in all areas of Judaism, Torah and *mitzvos*, especially to learn from the ways of the Rashbi as follows:

a) Learning Torah in a way of "*Toraso umnaso*." Every single Jew can do something of the sort. For example, at set times for Torah study one can be in a frame of mind of "*Toraso umnaso*," when one's heart and mind are free from the worries of making a living, etc.

b) *Avoda* should be in a manner of "in one bond I am bound up, in Him I am unified..." As a result, one's *avoda* in the area of "permitted things" will be in a way of "know Him in all your ways," that is, "your ways" (optional matters, such as eating) will be "to know Him" (Hashem).

(This point can and must be explained to all Jews, men, women and even children. Even the smallest children can also serve Hashem in a way of "know Him in all your ways." Even though it will be in their childish ways, "educate a child according to his way," through these ways they can come to truly "know Him," including the ultimate knowledge of "to know Him is to be Him." In fact, this is more readily accepted by children, as we know from the Sages' statement, "I *daven* with the knowledge of a child," who knows nothing about *sfiros*, the *seider ha'hishtalshelus*, etc., only G-d

Himself, His very essence, as the Alter Rebbe would say in his state of *dveikus*, "I want nothing except You alone.")

On the other hand, this can also be explained to adults, who strive to understand everything rationally (being a "wise and understanding nation") and with many explanations, both his own as well as explanations received from his teacher and his friends and from his students more than from anyone else.

A personal request: Try to add to the explanations in an appropriate manner, starting by explaining it to yourself so that when you give it over they will be words from your heart, which enter the heart of the listener, in addition to quoting the author -- if you think this will assure that it will more readily be adhered to, based on your judgement and understanding, to the benefit of the success in action, which is the main thing.

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