

Tazria Metzarah 5781
April 16th, 2021



a kid friendly publication of Nageela West Coast Joyfully Jewish Experiences



Barley Human

by Rabbi Dani Locker

"And you shall count for yourselves... from the day you bring the Omer." You might have heard that there's a mitzvah to count the days from the second day of Passover all the way up until the holiday of Shavuot, 50 days later. You might have even heard that this counting experience is called 'sefirat ha'omer- the counting of the omer.' Recently, someone asked me, "What is the omer, and why do we count from it?"

It's a solid question. I can understand the concept of counting up to the day we were set to receive the Torah. Anticipation, preparation, math practice... all good reasons to count, but why from this random 'omer' offering, and even more baffling, why does it get the name? We could have called it "Counting up the mountain," or "The Torah Countdown." What makes it even stranger is that the Omer wasn't a very im-

pressive or exciting offering. It was barley anything at all. No, that wasn't a typo. It was barley. Actually. You know, the grain? The one that you probably have never eaten except when your mom cooks it with mushrooms in a soup.

Here's one explanation that I found to be meaningful to me: When our ancestors left Egypt, we weren't exactly rocking and rolling in a spiritual sense. We barley had the merit to be freed at all. During the 49 days in between our exodus and the day God finally gave us the Torah, we changed, improved and grew. We



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Candle lighting

Honolulu	6:33
Scottsdale	6:41
Henderson	6:57
Las Vegas	6:57
San Diego	7:01
Irvine	7:05
Los Angeles	7:07
Reno	7:20
Oakland	7:28
Park City	7:48

Didja know you can sponsor an episode of Nageela Shabbos?
Contact us for details! You just might change your life!

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What does a vampire call a small serving of blood?

A platelet.

OUCH! GRRRRROAAN!
Have a better joke and want a shoutout in Nageela Shabbos? Just email it to dlocker@nageelawest.org

WHAT A WEEK

THIS PAST WEEK, WE HAD WELL OVER 100 MIDDLE SCHOOL STUDENTS AT IN PERSON EVENTS...

MONDAY- Las Vegas (Jewnior LNL)

WEDNESDAY- Orange County

WEDNESDAY- Park City Israel Event

THURSDAY- LA Valley (Aroma Street Cafe)

THURSDAY- LA City (STARJUICE)

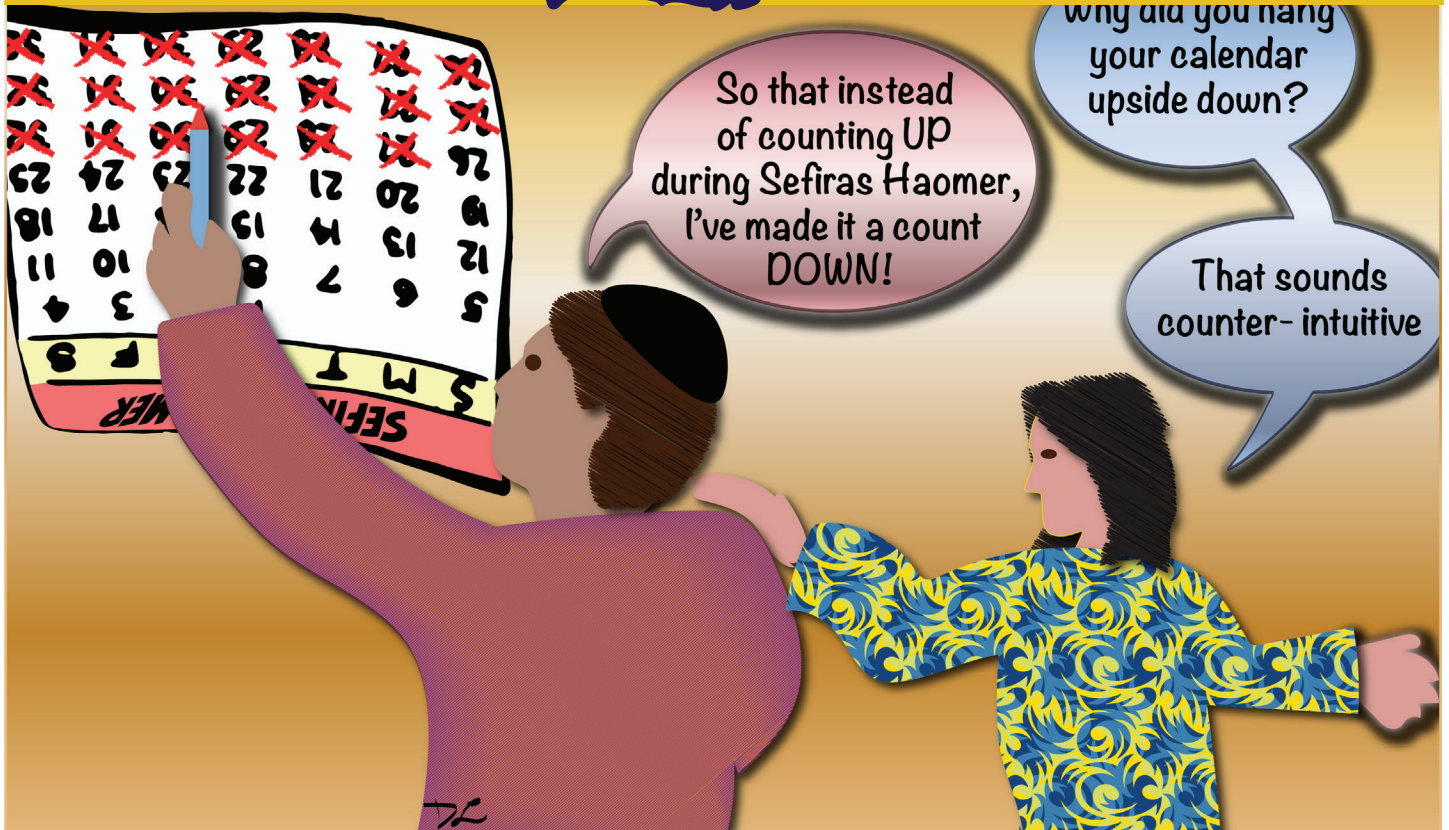
This coming week:
Chummus Virtual Event

witnessed miracles at the sea, raised our common voices in songs of praise, learned to trust God to provide water and bread for us, and began to feel like a holy people. The period of sefiras haomer is centered around that growth and every year, we make a priority of raising ourselves up during this seven week period. The omer represents this. You see, barley is a grain that is usually considered animal fodder (how do I know? My fodder told me years ago). On Passover we brought this offering of animal food, and 7 weeks later, after the process of sefirah, we brought an offering called the shnei halechem which was made from wheat. People food. This is our growth curve. We started off not far ahead of animals. Intelligent animals, but we had not distinguished ourselves. By the time we were done, we were worthy of human cuisine.

This is one of the goals of Sefiras Haomer. Our job is to take these 49 days and use each one to lift ourselves, day by day and level by level until we have achieved a higher form of life.

PICKLE JEWS

GALACTICALLY SYNDICATED
COMIC STRIP



Stump the Rabbi is a forum where kids can ask ANY Jewish question.

Have a question? Please send it in to stump@nageelawest.org

Questions here are real. Names and some wording have been changed.

Note: We call this 'Stump The Rabbi' for fun, but that's not really the point. The goal is to learn something important in an interesting way.

Stump the Rabbi



#167 You Are What You Eat

Hi Rabbi,

You know how some foods are kosher and some are not? Why? I mean why are some foods kosher, why does God want us to eat kosher, why do some kosher foods become unkosher when they get mixed with other things, and why do random items need kosher symbols?

Thanks,
Lotta Schmaltz

*Continued from last week

Dear Lotta,

Last week we answered part of the question, explaining why random items need kosher symbols. If you have forgotten, well, you can always access the archives (after Shabbos, of course) at nageelawest.org. We mentioned that only members of the animal kingdom can possibly be unkosher, and I'd like to discuss why.

Here's the disclaimer. If the question is "Why do we keep kosher?" then the answer is simple: Because God told us to. God is both infinitely smart and really caring. So any instructions given to us in the Torah should be followed even if we don't understand the reasons. If there are reasons we understand, you can rest assured there are many other, deeper, spiritual reasons that we can't begin to fathom. Still, fathoming is fun. So let's fathom

away, and try to understand perhaps some of the reasons why keeping kosher is meaningful.

There was a pretty cool science experiment done by Stanford University in 1971.

[Hey Rabbi, why are we talking about science?]

[Because it's interesting!]

[Geek.]

[Sigh- ence.]

A bunch of random college students were brought to a prison, and half of them were assigned to be prisoners, and half of them were assigned to be prison guards. The study found that the 'prisoners' started behaving like criminals (probably means they made up angry sounding nick-names and developed a strange appreciation of orange clothing) and the 'guards' started acting like police officers (which likely included a new appreciation for donuts with sprinkles smushed on just one corner, for some reason). This study and many, many others have shown that the things we do

REGISTRATION IS UNDERWAY FOR
CAMP NAGEELA WEST 2021 IN
JEWTAH

3 WEEKS, SPORTS, HORSEMANSHIP, NATURE,
FRIENDSHIPS, CREATIVE SPECIALTIES, WATER
SPORTS, JEWISH PRIDE AND EXCITEMENT!

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6

7

DAYS TO CAMP NAGEELA WEST
GIRLS SESSION

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9

3

DAYS TO CAMP NAGEELA WEST
BOYS SESSION

Find out about our summer 2021 and see photos from 2020 at nageelawest.org

continued

That brings us to the topic of eating. Hey, most things bring me to the topic of eating. I'm Jewish, after all. [Wait, a Jewish Rabbi?] After the great flood (not the one where the washing machine door popped open and ruined

**JEWNIOR
NCSY WEST
COAST VIR-
TUAL LAG
BA'OMER
EVENT**

Register at: <https://tinyurl.com/ncsybox>

1. Predators are never Kosher. Since it's all about the influence, we don't want anything to do with cruel animals. Split hooves and rumination are the signs of gentle animals who are the hunted, not the hunters. Both of these features allow animals to escape and hide from vicious animals.
2. For an animal to be Kosher, it must be slaughtered in the least painful possible way. I do NOT want to ruin your Shabbos meal appetite so I won't go into details of how it's done. Minimizing the pain helps guard us against becoming heartless.
3. We don't drink blood, and we salt our meat to remove blood before eating the meat (for all you chefs

Have a Nageela Shabbat,

Catev Knopf
Matthew Lewis
BZ Locker
Bertha Cohen
Dovid Niman
Marygrace Bower



Best wishes to our friends and family members celebrating this week...

Nageela West Coast

breaks the mold of old school Jewish outreach by providing out-of-the-box social and educational programs for Jewish children across the West Coast. Through afterschool activities, weekend retreats and our signature summer camp, we engage elementary and middle school children in a fun and meaningful experience. Our “questions encouraged” mindset makes Nageela a comfortable learning and growing environment for Jewish children of all backgrounds.