



Toras Avigdor

Junior

Adapted from the teachings
of Rav Avigdor Miller z"l

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פְּרִשֶׁת אֶמֶר

Counting Pastries

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In Honor of all **Toras Avigdor Junior** readers
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even in these trying circumstances.

Counting Pastries

Yeshivas Birchas Hagoimel — After Pesach

“As everyone knows,” said Rabbi Caplan, “we are now in the period of Sefiras Ha’omer. And to help us appreciate this wonderful mitzvah of counting Sefirah each day, Avraham Yitzchok Stern’s father, from Stern’s Bakery, has generously offered to donate a delicious danish to each boy for every day that he remembers to count Sefirah!”

The excited (and always hungry) boys cheered loudly and thanked Avraham Yitzchok as Rabbi Caplan took out a big box with the Stern’s logo and began distributing fresh danishes.

As Rabbi Caplan began making his way through the class, Moishy turned to his friend Yitzy and snickered, “Hey, Yitzy. I think I’ve figured out a way to convince Rebbi to give us a lot more than just one!”

Yitzy smiled. “Okay, go for it!” he said.

“Thanks, Rebbi!” Moishy said as Rabbi Caplan approached. “But isn’t there a machlokes whether Sefiras Ha’omer is one mitzvah or 49 separate mitzvos? And if it’s one big mitzvah, shouldn’t we get all 49 danishes today?”

Rabbi Caplan smiled. “Okay, boys, you got it,” he said, as he took back the pastries. “I’ll go to the bakery during recess and pick up an assortment of cakes and cookies.”

Moishy and Yitzy looked at each other with triumphant smiles, unable to believe that their scheme actually worked. “Yesss!!!” they both whispered excitedly, and they spent the next half-hour counting the minutes until recess.

After recess

Rabbi Caplan returned to the classroom carrying yet another large bakery box and walked over to Moishy and Yitzy. “Okay, are you boys ready?”

Both boys nodded vigorously and looked on with amazement as Rabbi Caplan carefully piled a mountain of cookies, cakes, éclairs, and rugelach onto plates in front of them. 49 luscious pastries, each one different from the next. The rest of the class looked on with envy, as Rabbi Caplan said, “Go ahead! Make a brachah!”

Moishy and Yitzy made a beautiful “Borei minei mezonos” together and began to eat pastry after pastry with the widest of smiles. “This is Gan Eden!” they thought. First a cherry danish. Then a chocolate rugelah. A sugar cookie, strawberry shortcake, jelly donut! But as they continued to eat, they started chewing slower and slower and slower... until finally Moishy put down the cheesecake he was holding and said, “Rebbi, I can’t eat any more. I’m full.”

“No worries, boys!” said Rabbi Caplan cheerfully. “We’ll just wrap up the rest for tomorrow!” And he slid the two plates and their 35-or-so remaining pastries into Ziploc bags and put them in a drawer in his desk.

The next day

“Boys!” began Rabbi Caplan. “It’s time for today’s Sefirah treat!” The class cheered again, as Rabbi Caplan began walking around handing out cinnamon buns. Then he took out Moishy’s and Yitzy’s ziplock bags from his drawer and served them their remaining pastries.

Moishy and Yitzy looked a bit queasy. “Rebbi,” Moishy began. “I don’t think I can eat any more pastries.” Yitzy nodded in agreement.

“That’s okay,” said Rabbi Caplan. “I’ll let you eat them after recess like yesterday if you like.”



“No, I don’t think you understand, Rabbi,” said Yitzy. “We don’t want any more pastries ever again. Ever.”

Rabbi Caplan smiled as he returned to the front of the room. “Boys, I think we just learned an important lesson about Sefiras Ha’omer!”

“Sefiras Ha’omer?” asked Moishy. “I definitely learned a lesson about not being greedy and eating too many cookies, and I learned about stomach aches, too, but what does that have to do with Sefirah?”

“Have you ever wondered,” asked Rabbi Caplan, “why we count Sefirah? What is so important about counting every day? Of course, we are anticipating Shavuos coming, but the Torah wants to teach us something even more important. Rav Avigdor Miller says that Hashem davka divided life into small pieces. We have days, months, and years. Why is that? Why couldn’t it just always be light outside? Why do we need night and day? Hashem could have just put us here in Olam Hazeh and said, “Go! I’m giving you one big day that will last about 120 years. Enjoy it!

“But Hashem had a better plan than that. He wants us to always appreciate life, and waking up each morning to a new day allows us to look at each day anew. “Yay! Another day of life!” That’s how you’re supposed to think in the morning when you say Modeh Ani.

“This is what Hashem wants us to learn during the days of Sefirah. Count each day separately, because each day is worth counting. By counting every day on its own, we learn to appreciate the pleasure of life in a way that we never could otherwise. And don’t stop when Shavuos comes! Count every day of your life and appreciate each one.”

After school

“Wow,” said Moishy, as he and Yitzy walked home. “We sure learned our lesson there.”

“Absolutely,” agreed Yitzy. “How silly of us to ask for all of those treats at once and think that we’d enjoy it more that way. And Rabbi is right that it’s not only true about danishes. From now on, I’m going to make sure to enjoy each and every day as it comes. That’s what I’ll think about when I count Sefirah tonight.”

Moishy nodded. “And that’s what I’ll think about every morning when I wake up. ‘Another day of life!’ And I’ll enjoy all my 120 years, one day at a time.”

Wishing Everyone a Happy and Healthy Shabbos!