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Jewish & Pro-Life? Count Me In!

June 1, 2019



The Jewish practice known as 'Counting the Omer' occurs between Passover, which commemorates the Exodus from Egypt, and Shavuot, a celebration of the giving of the Torah on Mt. Sinai. Currently, we are in the

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In

midst of this year's Omer count. It began on April 21, 2019 (Nissan 16) and ends on June 8, 2019 (Sivan 5). During these 49 days, Jews make a studied and mindful effort to replicate the spiritual transformation experienced by our ancestors as they transitioned from a degraded Egyptian existence to an elevated consciousness of God’s presence.

We seriously evaluate and improve our spiritual status through the methodical examination and practice of seven attributes of the human personality - Kindness, Discipline, Compassion, Ambition, Humility, Connection and Leadership. Each week concentrates on a single trait as balanced by each of the seven, producing 49 possible responses to everyday situations.

Though drawing on psychological, emotional, and intellectual elements, this exercise remains primarily spiritual, based upon Judaism's fundamental principles: 1) the presence in the world of the Almighty God, to whom we swear exclusive faithfulness, devotion, and loyalty, 2) the Almighty God creates human life in His image so that we may in turn create and expand goodness here on

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Earth. and 3) we are obligated to hold sacred the sanctity of every human life by respecting the value, dignity and worth of each individual.

Restated many times throughout the entire Torah, no doubt exists that these principles form the foundation of Jewish life. Prohibitions against their opposites, idolatry, sexual impropriety and child sacrifice, earn equal time.

Within these guidelines and with God's assistance and mercy, we gain the insight, wisdom, and power to live a truly good life though surrounded by a spiritually degraded culture of death and willful misconduct in which human life is expendable and exploited for personal and financial gain.

When we give glory to HaShem by acknowledging His infinite wisdom, His love for us, and His superior plan for each and every human life, we are able to problem solve and find creative ways to grow and change while keeping our self respect, dignity, and moral integrity. The personality traits of kindness, discipline, compassion, ambition, humility, connection and leadership

complement each other to produce positivity and happiness, guaranteeing us safe passage through life as we meet our obligations and responsibilities.

When we shift our allegiance and trust to some person, organization, ideology, or human based system, we become influenced by social pressure, fear of abandonment, insecurity, and loss of status or self definition. We are vulnerable to moral and mental confusion, which allows us to be victimized, manipulated, used, and abused. Conversely, we may become perpetrators, justifying using, abusing, victimizing, or manipulating others in the name of a goal deemed righteous, necessary, or beneficial. Oftentimes, we are complicit in our own demise, only realizing this later and after irreversible consequences.

Fake news, fake Judaism, and fake scholarship permeate everyday life, setting us up for mistakes in judgement leading to pain, disappointment, and tragedy. Each mistake serves as an opportunity for self reflection, personal growth and change. It is vitally important at these times to have a keen sense of God’s

mercy, forgiveness, and love for us. Judaism is a forgiving faith, offering a pathway to healing and spiritual renewal through humble, sincere remorse and atonement through acts of service and moral mentorship. We need not become trapped in self defeating, never ending shame, guilt, and despair, for these nullify the possibility of turning our errors into good purpose.

As we complete the Counting of the Omer this coming week, we pray that our personality transformation prepares us to once again to receive our blessed Torah, a monumental and extraordinary covenant that gives the world the direction and confidence to build a culture of life on Earth reflective of the Divine Presence in Heaven.

May there be abundant peace from Heaven, and good life upon us and upon all Israel. Amen.

Cecily

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