

בית הוראה דיעטראיט
BAIS HORAAH OF DETROIT
HALACHA HOTLINE

UNDER THE AUSPICES OF HaRav Shmuel Irons שליט"א VAAD HALACHA Rav Aharon Yoel Sorscher · Rav Yissachar Wolf · Rav Boruch Miller

KITCHEN * SHABBOS * YOM TOV * BRACHOS * AVEILUS * TAHARAS HAMISHPACHA * EVERYDAY SHAILOS

ISSUE #4 – MINHAGEI SEFIRA

Commonly Received Questions and their Answers

- **What are the reasons given for the mourning during the weeks of Sefira?**
 - 24,000 of R' Akiva's talmidim died during this period
 - Thousands of Jews in Europe lost their lives during the Crusades, as well as during the Chmelnitsky massacres
 - Throughout the generations, many Yidden have been martyred during this time period
- **What restrictions apply during the omer period?**
 - Since the time of the Geonim, Klal Yisroel has observed three primary forms of aveilus during this period:
 - Not making weddings
 - Not taking haircuts or shaving
 - Not dancing or listening to music
- **When do these restrictions apply?**
 - The two most common minhagim for observing the aveilus are as follows:
 1. 33 days from the first day of the omer (the second day of Pesach) until the morning of Lag Ba'omer
 - Sefardim observe this minhag until the 34th day of the Omer
 2. From Rosh Chodesh Iyar until three days before Shavuos in the morning. Lag Ba'omer (from morning until sunset) is excluded.
- **Is it permitted to change one's minhag from year to year?**
 - Ideally one should maintain the same minhag from year to year. In a case of significant need, e.g. to accommodate a family simcha, one should consult a halachic authority.
- **May one attend a wedding during the half of sefira that he is keeping?**
 - It is permitted to attend a wedding even during the half that one is keeping. However, one may not shave or get a haircut for the wedding.
- **When is it permitted to make a wedding during sefira?**

One may not make a wedding during the period of sefira that he is keeping. One who is observing the second minhag may make a wedding until Rosh Chodesh Iyar. Even if keeping the first half, weddings should not be made from after Lag Ba'omer until 3 days before Shavuos. If there is a pressing need to do so, a halachic authority should be consulted. Weddings are permitted on the day of Lag Ba'omer, regardless of which half one is keeping. The chuppah must be completed before sunset, and the wedding celebration can then continue into the night. In a case of need, a wedding can also be made on the night of Lag Ba'omer.
- **Are there circumstances in which hair cutting is permitted?**
 - Even children should not get haircuts during sefira. However, if there is a significant need one can be lenient. Eyebrows may be cut. Regarding other types of hair removal, a halachic authority should be consulted. Nails may be cut. A sheitel is considered a garment, and therefore may be cut.
- **Is there any time during sefira at which it is permitted to shave or get a haircut?**
 - If one will suffer significant financial loss by not cutting hair or shaving, a halachic authority should be consulted.

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- When Rosh Chodesh Iyar falls on Shabbos, it is permitted to shave and take a haircut on Friday in honor of Shabbos and Rosh Chodesh.
- When Lag Ba'omer falls on a Sunday, it is permitted to shave or take a haircut on the Erev Shabbos prior.
- Shaving and haircuts are permitted during the daytime of Lag Ba'omer.
- If a bris is held during sefira, the sandek, mohel and father of the baby may shave and take a haircut in advance of the bris. Note: this does not apply to other simchas, such as a Pidyon Haben, Bar Mitzvah, wedding, etc.

● **Are any forms of music permitted?**

- Chazanus, or singing without any instruments or digital enhancements, is permitted, as long as the style will not bring a person to dancing, clapping or other demonstrative forms of joy.
- Much of the acapella music on the market today is produced digitally, using clips of the human voice as instruments, and as such is not permitted during sefira. Such recordings are no different than recordings produced with clips of actual musical instruments, as is done on a keyboard. Additionally, even those acapella recordings produced without digital enhancements are not permitted during sefira if the tunes bring one to dancing or excessive simcha. Recordings which are produced purely with the human voice and do not have a fast, exciting beat are permitted.
- There are circumstances where a halachic authority can permit listening to music in specific cases, for example when someone is feeling down or depressed.
- Playing music in a professional capacity for the purpose of one's livelihood is permitted. Music lessons during sefirah may be permitted under certain circumstances. A shailah should be asked in specific cases.
- One who requires music to stay awake on the road or to facilitate exercise for health reasons is permitted to listen to music in those situations.
- It is permitted to enter a store in which music is playing as long as his intention is to shop rather than focus on the music.
- It is permitted to have music playing for children who are under the age of chinuch. Once children are above the age of chinuch, it is appropriate for them to refrain from listening to music.
- If a sheva berachos takes place during sefira, music and dancing are permitted if they are common at sheva berachos.
- A Hachnasos Sefer Torah which takes place during sefira may have music & dancing.
- A bar mitzvah or a vort may not have music or dancing.
- Music is permitted on Chol HaMoed even for those keeping first half, however dancing is not permitted.

● **May one buy new clothing or items that require shehechyanu during the omer period?**

- These restrictions apply only during the aveilus of the 3 Weeks, not sefira. In the absence of a minhag to the contrary, one may purchase new clothing and items requiring a bracha of shehechyanu during sefira.

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