

Weddings during Sefirat Haomer

1. The custom is not to get married during Sefirat Haomer as a sign of mourning for the students of Rabbi Akiva who passed away during this period.¹ There are differing practices for when this is observed.²
 - a. Some say that the students died during the first 33 days of Sefirat Haomer. Accordingly, the mourning would finish immediately after that.³
 - b. Others mourn 33 days spread throughout Sefirat Haomer, at different times.⁴
 - c. Rav Moshe Feinstein writes that one may switch customs from year to year.⁵
2. If a marriage involves a couple with different customs, for example, one side who is Ashkenazic and one side Sephardic, the custom of the husband should be followed.⁶
3. If one is invited to a wedding during Sefirat Haomer while he is mourning, he may attend the wedding.⁷ However, one should not shave in such a situation.⁸

¹ The Gemara Yevamot 62b records the tragic story of Rabbi Akiva's students' deaths between Pesach and Shavuot. The practice became to accept certain aspects of mourning during this period. see Teshuvot Hagonim, Shaare Teshuva 278. Shulchan Aruch 493:1 records the practice not to get married during this period.

² Mishna Berura 493:14-15 writes that although all agree that we refrain for 33 days, there are different approaches for when. See sefer Bein Pesach L'Shavuot (pg. 223-240) who details 10 different minhagim.

³ Bet Yosef 493:2 quotes Rav Yehoshua Ibn Shuiv who cites a Midrash which says they died until פרוט עזרת, or 15 days before Shavuot. This leaves the first 34 days. Based on *Miktzat HaYom KeKulo* (a portion of the day is considered like a whole day) one may stop mourning on the morning of the 34th. This is how he rules in Shulchan Aruch 493:2. Kaf Hachaim 493:12, Chacham Ovadia Yosef (Chazon Ovadia Yom Tov pg. 253, Yabia Omer 3:26, Yechave Daat 4:32) and Yalkut Yosef (Moadim pg. 428) write that this is the prevalent Sephardic custom.

The Rama there allows getting married on the 33rd day in the morning. The Gra 493:9 understands that the Rama basically agrees with the Shulchan Aruch but he holds that the students of Rabbi Akiva stopped dying on the 33rd day. The Bach (d"h U'Mah), on the other hand, thinks that the Rama subscribes to the approach of Tosafot (see next note). Mishna Berura 493:11 writes that one should not get married on the night of the 33rd, because we require that he mourn part of the daytime to apply *Miktzat Hayom Kekulo*. Rav Moshe Feinstein (Igrot Moshe 1:159) however, is lenient for the night before. [Halachically Speaking Vol. 5 Issue 9](#) writes the overwhelming custom is to be lenient.

⁴ Bet Yosef 493:3 quotes Rav Yehoshua Ibn Shuiv who records the approach of Tosafot that Rabbi Akiva's students died throughout the period between Pesach and Shavuot, excluding 16 days on which tachanun is omitted (the 7 days of Pesach, 6 Shabbatot, 2 days of Rosh Chodesh Iyar, and 1 day of Rosh Chodesh Sivan), leaving 33 days. Therefore, the Jews accepted to mourn for 33 days. The Maharil (Dinei Hayamim Bein Pesach LiShavuot 7) subscribes to this as well and it is mentioned by the Rama 493:3.

Magen Avraham 493:5 writes that some observe this practice by mourning from the day after Rosh Chodesh Iyar until Erev Shavuot excluding Lag BaOmer, while others observe this practice by mourning from the first day of Rosh Chodesh Iyar until 3 days before Shavuot.

⁵ In analyzing the different practices, Rav Moshe Feinstein (OC 1:159) notes that those who observe 33 non-consecutive days are all of the same opinion but they choose different days to observe. Therefore, in theory, one may choose to observe a different set of 33 days from one year to the next. The reason why specific days are chosen for these various minhagim is because there must be uniformity within the same city. In New York, where the inhabitants originate from many different cities and all of the various minhagim are represented, the concern for the violation of *lo titgodi* is mitigated and one may follow any of the minhagim. Therefore, one who has the tradition to observe 33 non-consecutive days, may switch from one minhag to another from year to year. Additionally, since the Bach thinks the Rama follows Tosafot, one can, in theory, switch to the minhag of counting the first 33 days. However, one should only do so in a case of great need.

See, however, Rabbi Shimon Eider's Sefer Halachos of Pesach (vol. 2, pg. 332) who quotes Rav Aharon Kotler as holding that one may not switch 'Sefirahs' unless in case of necessity and with Hatarat Nedarim.

⁶ Chazon Ovadia (Yom Tov pg. 256), Yalkut Yosef (Moadim pg. 429), Rav Elyashiv (Piskei Shemuot pg. 59). However, Minchat Yitzchak 4:84 questions this, as following the customs of the husband would only apply after marriage.

⁷ Rav Moshe Feinstein (Igrot Moshe OC 1:159), Rav Soloveitchik (quoted in Nefesh Harav pg. 192), Rav Schachter ([Minhagei Sefirah](#) at ~20 minutes), Rav Shlomo Zalman Auerbach (Halichot Shlomo 11:19), Rav Elyashiv (Ashrei Ha'ish 3:65:30), Rav Yaakov Kamenetsky (Emet L'yaakov 493: note 465), Rav Shalom Messas (Shemesh U'Magen OC 68). Rav Moshe's rationale is that once a marriage has taken place, it creates an obligation of simcha. For example, a couple who gets married at the end of Nisan is allowed to continue with sheva berachot festivities, which should have been forbidden for the other participants. Additionally, Shulchan Aruch writes that we don't penalize those who violate the minhag, and there would be no greater penalty than having nobody to celebrate with. [Halachically Speaking Vol. 5 Issue 9](#) quotes Rav Belsky who points out that one who attends a wedding during the time he is observing the restrictions of sefira may only dance after the chattan and kallah come out because before they come out the dancing is not considered to be making them happy. However, Minchat Yitzchak 4:84 disagrees and feels that one may not attend a wedding during their Sefira. Rav Shmuel Vosner (Piskei Shemuot pg. 58) says that one should just go to wish a Mazel Tov but not participate.

⁸ Rav Moshe Feinstein (Igrot Moshe OC 2:95) writes that unless being unable to shave will prevent you from going, it is not permissible to shave. However, if he realized earlier that he would be attending a wedding, he could plan accordingly by changing his custom for just that year, as per the teshuva mentioned above.