

Parshas Emor - Journey Through Time

In this week's *parsha*, *Parshas Emor*, the Torah takes us on a journey through the Jewish calendar year. דָּבַר אֱלֹהֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל, וְאָמַרְתָּ אֲלֵהֶם, מוֹעֲדֵי ה', אֲשֶׁר-תִּקְרְאוּ אֹתָם מִקְרָאֵי קֹדֶשׁ--אֵלֶּה מוֹעֲדֵי הָהֵם, - *And Hashem spoke to Moshe saying: Speak to the Children of Israel and say to them: Hashem's appointed festivals which you shall designate as callings of holiness - these are my appointed festivals* (Vayikra 23:1-2).

The verses then delineate our holy days, beginning with Shabbos and Rosh Chodesh (see Rashi to 23:4); moving to Pesach, through Sefiras ha'Omer and then to Shavuos; Rosh Hashana to Yom Kippur; Succos to Shmini Atzeres.

To be a Jew is to live a sacred life, an ordered life, an appointed life, a scheduled life.

R' Soloveitchik zt'l teaches, "מִקְרָאֵי קֹדֶשׁ - *holy occasions*. To modern man, a day is not a living entity. We do not associate the term 'day' with substance or content; it is not a subject to which attributes can be ascribed or traits predicated. To the scientist, time is a mathematical concept. Modern physics has combined time with space, rendering time as empty as space, merely one coordinate of a system within which we try to model the universe.

"To Judaism, in contrast, *time is a living entity*. There is substance and essence to time. Time is not a void but a *reality*. One can ascribe attributes such as joyous or sad to time just as one can ascribe these attributes to people. One can refer to a day as evil, meaning that the day itself is cursed [9 Av]. When we refer to a holy day, we do not merely signify that it is a day in which man somehow experiences holiness. The day *itself* has an inner endowment, a charisma hidden in its very substance. It has suddenly become a metaphysical entity." (Chumash Masores HaRav, Vayikra, p.180)

*Imagine there is a bank which credits your account each morning with \$86,400, carries over no balance from day to day, allows you to keep no cash balance, and every evening cancels whatever part of the amount you had failed to use during the day.*

*What would you do?*

*Draw out every cent, of course!*

*Well, everyone has such a bank. It's name is **time**.*

*Every morning, it credits you with 86,400 seconds.*

*Every night it writes off, as lost, whatever of this you have failed to invest to good purpose.*

*It carries over no balance. It allows no overdraft.*

*Each day it opens a new account for you.*

*Each night it burns the records of the day.*

*If you fail to use the day's deposits, the loss is yours.*

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*There is no going back. There is no drawing against the tomorrow.*

*You must live in the present on today's deposits.*

*Invest it so as to get from it the utmost in health, happiness and success!*

*The clock is running. Make the most of today. (Author unknown)*

*And you shall count for yourself, from the morrow of the rest day, from the day you bring the omer as a wave offering, seven weeks, they shall be complete. עד ממחרת השבת השביעית, תספרו יום - You shall count until the day after the seventh week, the fiftieth day, on which you will bring a new meal offering to Hashem (Vayikra 23:15-16).*

While we have left Egypt mere weeks ago, we are marching to freedom, to *Har Sinai*, to *Kabbalas Ha'Torah*. And marking our freedom is a *new count, every day!* What is the significance of this count of the Omer period, as it marks our transition from slave to free man?

Rav Soloveitchik teaches, “*Qualitative time-consciousness is comprised of the appreciation of the enormous implications in the fleeting moments of the present. No fraction of time, however infinitesimal, should slip through the fingers, left unexploited; for eternity may depend upon the brief moment... A slave who is capable of appreciating each day, of grasping its meaning and worth, of weaving every thread of time into a glorious fabric, quantitatively stretching over a period of seven weeks but qualitatively forming the warp and woof of centuries of change, is eligible for Torah. He has achieved freedom.*” (Chumash Masores HaRav, Vayikra, p.185)

Rav Aharon Yehuda Wilner zt'l (d. Elul 5746/1986) lived in Williamsburg, NY and served as the *Rosh Yeshiva* of *Yeshivas Shearith Hapletah Sanz Klausenberg* for over forty years. The Klausenberger Rebbe zt'l regarded the *Rosh Yeshiva* as a “living sefer Torah and a master of the entire Talmud and commentaries,” for whom he had enormous respect.

R' Aharon Yehuda once told a student, “Even if I was paid a million dollars to sit for one minute and do nothing, I cannot.”

Our *journey* through time, our *appreciation* of time, our *ownership* of time, our *sanctification* of time, marks our freedom from bondage to liberation, from depression to elevation, from Egypt to Har Sinai, from impurity to the highest heights of Torah.

May we be humble and wise enough to always appreciate the value inherent in each moment of time, and use it well, as we climb ever higher as *ovdei Hashem* (servants of G-d), *amen*.

בברכת בשורות טובות ושבת שלום