

Days, Weeks, Torah & Spirituality (*Emor*)

When it comes to the Omer, Parshat Emor instructs us: *'You shall count for yourselves seven complete weeks. To the day after the seventh week, you shall count fifty days'* (Vayikra 23:15-16). In contrast, Parshat Re'eh states that, *'You shall count seven weeks'* (Devarim 16:9). As Abaye explains in *Chagigah* 17b, from here we learn that *'it is a mitzvah to count days - as it is written "you shall count fifty days" (Vayikra 23:16), and it is a mitzvah to count weeks - as it is written "you shall count seven weeks" (Devarim 16:9).'*

What this suggests is that counting days is different from counting weeks, and when it comes to *Sefirat HaOmer* we need to count both. The question is: how should we relate differently to the counting of the days and the weeks of the Omer?

Rabbi Asher Weiss addresses this topic in his *Sichot Al HaMoadim* where he notes the concept, initially proposed by Rabbi Yisrael Salanter and subsequently taught by Rabbi Elya Lopian as well as the Chiddushei HaRim, that the 48 ways through which the Torah is acquired as recorded in *Pirkei Avot* 6:6 correlate to the days of the Omer. Accordingly, the days of the Omer are about preparing ourselves for receiving the Torah.

Alongside this, the Zohar (*Emor* 175) explains that the weeks of the Omer correlate to seven weeks of counting seven clean days (*shiv'a neki'im*) of the *Zava*. And what does this counting represent? Our transformation from the remnants of the spiritual impurity which Bnei Yisrael had absorbed from the idolatrous Egyptian culture in order to be spiritually ready for Matan Torah.

Thus, the process of counting both the days and weeks of the Omer teaches us about purifying ourselves from unwanted spiritual impurity and about preparing ourselves to acquire the Torah.

However, in addition to this explanation, I came across a different approach by Rabbi Meir Horowitz of Dzikov (1819-1877) who explains in his *Imrei Noam* commentary that the concept of 'day' refers to intellectual clarity (because the day is bright and clear), while 'week' refers to our values which give us a life of meaning and our character traits which thereby express our values. Put simply, day refers to the mind, while week refers to our character traits.

Understood this way, the process of counting both the days and weeks of the Omer teaches us about the importance of both nurturing our thoughts and perfecting our values and character traits to be worthy to receive the Torah.

Shabbat Shalom!