



Emor: Make it Count

Rabbi Shmuel Silber

And you shall count for yourselves, from the morrow of the rest day from the day you bring the Omer as a wave offering seven weeks; they shall be complete. (Vayikra 23:15).

Nestled amongst the many mitzvos of this week's parsha is the Omer offering. This was a barley offering, brought on the second day of Pesach which allowed the consumption of chadash (new crop of grain). In addition to the offering, we are commanded to count the days between Pesach and Shavuos. We are to count, seven weeks, forty-nine days, and on the fiftieth day, we celebrate the Yom Tov of Shavuos. This count creates a bridge between Pesach and Shavuos and we are reminded that our emancipation was to enable us to self-actualize through the acceptance of the Torah.

There is an interesting halachik debate as to how to view the mitzvah of counting the days of the Omer. Do we look at this count as forty-nine independent mitzvos? Or is it one long mitzvah comprised of forty-nine parts? The *nafka mina* (practical difference) is quite significant. What should one do if one missed a day of the count? If you accept the view that each day is an independent mitzvah, then missing one day does not preclude you from continuing forward. However, if you accept the premise that it is one long mitzvah then missing one day would preclude you from continuing on. *Halacha L'Maaseh* (practically speaking) we accept a hybrid approach. If one misses a day, one must continue to count, albeit without a beracha (blessing).

This approach resonates with life importance as well. How do we look at time? Do we look at time as incremental, individual days or as a continuum? Or to perhaps say it a little differently, how do we gauge a successful life? Is a successful life measured in terms of how one has spent their weeks, months, and years, or is it measured in how we use our days? Of course, the answer is both. To live a meaningful and therefore, successful life, we must develop intermediate and long-term goals. What do we want to accomplish? Who do we want to become? Where do we want to end up? After we identify these goals, we must make a plan to get there. But the thing about long-term goals is that – they are long term. I do not always see movement and momentum with them every day which is why we must also focus on how we use the day. Each and every day is filled with so much opportunity for growth, meaning, and fulfillment. Each day offers us the opportunity to make a difference in our own lives and in the lives of others. What do we each do with the gift of today? How can I take the hours that have been granted to me and make them into something special? This is the dual message of Sefiras HaOmer. Count seven weeks, but at the same time, count forty-nine days. Make a long-term plan but also find the strength to maximize the day.