



Moshiach & Sefiras Ha'omer

A Practical Discussion

We are all aware that the coming of Moshiach and the future *geulah* are not abstract concepts, but rather part of our everyday consciousness, as it is said, “I await his coming every day, that he should come.”

There is a lesson from Sefiras Ha'omer: When the Yidden left Mitzrayim, they counted the days leading up to the giving of the Torah at Har Sinai, yearning for the day to come. This needs to be our approach as well—waiting and yearning every day for Moshiach to come.

In addition, the mitzvah of *sefiras ha'omer* has another obvious connection to this idea of constantly yearning for the coming of Moshiach:

According to most opinions, the mitzvah of counting Sefiras Ha'omer only applies when the *Beis Hamikdash* is standing. In the time of *golus*, the *sefiras ha'omer* that we count is not a *d'oraysa*, but rather instituted *mid'rabbanan* as a *zecher l'Mikdash*—commemorating the *sefrah* in the times of the *Beis Hamikdash*.

This is why we say a special *tefillah* right after Sefiras Ha'omer asking for the *Beis Hamikdash* to be rebuilt. We are acknowledging that we have not fulfilled the mitzvah in the most complete way, and requesting that very soon we merit to have the *Beis Hamikdash* and perform the mitzvah *d'oraysa*.

COMPLETENESS IN SEFIRAH

Regarding *sefiras ha'omer* the Torah says “Seven complete weeks you shall count...”—there is a special command that the weeks be whole and complete.

It is brought in the Midrash,¹ “Reb Chiya says, When are the weeks complete? When the Yidden are fulfilling Hashem's will.”

The Rebbe explains this Midrash to mean, that when the Yidden will fulfill Hashem's will and merit the coming of Moshiach, then the mitzvah will be complete. I.e. we will fulfill the mitzvah of *sefirah* in its complete manner, as a *d'oraysa*.

This brings us to a very interesting question:

If Moshiach were to come during the days of *sefirah*, would we have the mitzvah *d'oraysa* of counting from that point on? Or would we need to wait until the next year to count from the beginning of *sefiras ha'omer*?

THE PROBLEM

Why might you think that the mitzvah does not begin immediately, and we would need to wait until the next year?

לזכות
מרים מינדל שתחיל בת רייזל
שיקויים בה
ברכת כ"ק אדמו"ר אליה
...ביחד עם בעלה ש"י לגדל
כיו"ח ש"י לתחומע"ט מתוך
שמחה והרחבה...."



Firstly, there is the issue of the *korban ha'omer*. The Torah says “You shall count from the second day of Pesach, the day that you bring the [*korban*] omer...”. It follows that if Moshiach does not arrive before the second day of Pesach, the *omer* is not brought that year. How then can the mitzvah (*d'oraysa*) of *sefiras ha'omer* apply?!

However, this can be answered if we take into account another important aspect of *sefiras ha'omer*. The Torah says “until the day after the seventh week [Shavuos], you shall count fifty days and bring the bread of waving [*shte'i halechem*]”. This means that the mitzvah of *sefiras ha'omer* is also in place as a preparation for Shavuos.

If we look at *sefirah* as a preparation for Shavuos then if Moshiach comes during *sefiras ha'omer* we would obviously be able to begin the mitzvah immediately.

In addition, there is another answer to account for the lack of the *korban omer* in a year when Moshiach arrives during the days of *sefirah*. The Torah doesn't say that you count from the **offering** of the *korban omer*, rather that you count “**from the day of the bringing** of the *korban omer*.” This means that if there is a *Beis Hamikdash* and on the 16th of Nissan the *omer* is not brought for whatever reason, there is still a mitzvah of *sefiras ha'omer*.

Now, during the time of *golus*, because there is no *Beis Hamikdash*, the day of the 16th of Nissan is no longer considered **the day of the bringing** of the *korban omer*, so there is no mitzvah *d'oraysa*.

However, once Moshiach comes then the 16th of Nissan is once again **potentially** the day of the *korban omer*. Therefore, there is no need for the *omer* to actually have been brought for the mitzvah of *sefiras ha'omer* to resume the status of *d'oraysa*.

MISSING DAYS

There is another issue that needs to be addressed with regard to Moshiach's coming during the days of *sefirah*.

We are all well aware that the mitzvah of *sefiras ha'omer* needs to be performed from beginning to end without missing any days. If one did not begin counting on the second day of Pesach, he cannot count with a *bracha* later on. Even if one began counting, but missed a single day in middle, he is lacking the completeness and can no longer make a *bracha*.

Accordingly, if Moshiach was not here at the beginning of *sefirah*, how can we begin to count with the status of *d'oraysa* halfway in? We are then missing all the days up until that point!

(Even if we did in fact count each day until that point, the counting had only the status of a *d'rabbanan*; from the perspective of the Torah, there was no counting.)

The answer is that if we look a little deeper we will realize that the counting that we did during *golus* was indeed considered counting from the perspective of Torah. Accordingly we can begin to count with the status of a *d'oraysa* as soon as Moshiach arrives.

Here's how:

When the Torah attaches significance to a time, place, or object, it takes on a special value. This is true even if the Torah did not command us to do a mitzvah with the said time, place or object.

For example: the Torah gives importance to matzah. This means that matzah is “something” in the eyes of Torah; even before the Torah commands us to eat matzah on Pesach, the Torah has declared that matzah is important and has a place in Hashem's plan for creation.

The same applies with regard to the days of *sefiras ha'omer*. If the

Torah never gives an importance to these days, the concept of counting the days would have no holiness to it whatsoever. However Torah said that these days are “special,” thereby giving them a unique status—an object of value in Hashem's eyes. Just as we explained with regard to matzah, this status remains without regard to whether or not there is a mitzvah *d'oraysa* at the present time.

Therefore, when we count the *omer* during *golus*, we still effectively mark the days of *sefirah*. Accordingly, if Moshiach arrives in middle of *sefirah*, we can commence counting with the full status of a *d'oraysa*, without any “missing” days.

CONCLUSION

In conclusion, if Moshiach comes during *sefirah* we will begin to count as a mitzvah *d'oraysa*.

It is interesting to note that the Minchas Elazar says² that in a certain sense the counting once Moshiach comes will have a retroactive effect on the previous days before Moshiach's coming. The mitzvah *d'oraysa* of *sefiras ha'omer* will apply to the earlier days giving them the status of *d'oraysa* as well. We must therefore have in mind when counting *sefirah* (even though we are in *golus*) that we could potentially be fulfilling a mitzvah *d'oraysa*, for Moshiach could come any day.

As we say in the *tefillah* after *sefiras ha'omer*, “May Hashem restore to us the *avoda* in the *Beis Hamikdash* speedily in our days,” and already this year we will fulfill the mitzvah of *sefiras ha'omer* in the most complete manner.³ **1**

1. Vayikra Rabah 28,3

2. Teshuva in Sefer Nimukei Orach Chaim

3. Adapted from the Sicha of Acharon Shel Pesach 5751 in Sefer Hinei Yomim Boim