



Kinder Torah



Dedicated in Loving Memory of Avigdor Ben Avraham and Breina Chaya Bas Efraim
Mr. and Mrs. Victor Groffman ז"ל • Yahrzeit ז' אייר ה'

Patience to Learn

"Today is twenty days, which are two weeks and six days of the Omer." We are now in the midst of the seven-week mitzvah of *Sefiras Ha'omer*. The source of this mitzvah is a verse in this week's parasha. "You shall count for yourselves...from the day you bring the Omer...seven weeks, they shall be complete" (Vayikra 23:15). The Avudraham relates that in the times of the Beis HaMikdash, every landowner was busy with harvesting his grain after Pesach. They did not have time to keep in touch with each other. Therefore, they might lose track of the days, and forget to go up to the Beis HaMikdash on Shavuus. Consequently, Hashem commanded each individual to count the Omer, thereby marking the days between Pesach and Shavuus.

The Sefer HaChinuch mentions a different reason, which is also applicable nowadays. Shavuus is the day that we received the Torah. Keeping the Torah and Mitzvos is our mission in this world. Our meeting with Hashem at Har Sinai to receive the Torah was and is the reason that we were freed from Mitzraim. The day is filled with the same *kedusha* (holiness) every year. We are able to receive the same Torah. Therefore, we anticipate the coming of the great event by counting the days from Pesach (*Yetzias Mitzraim*) to Shavuus (*Kabbalas HaTorah*).

Such a monumental event requires preparation. One cannot just wake up one morning and receive the Torah. Therefore, we work on ourselves for these 49 days, to make ourselves into *kelim* (vessels) fitting to hold the Torah. The Chidushei HaRim introduced the idea of studying the 48 paths to acquiring Torah (found in the sixth chapter of Pirkei Avos) during this time. Each day of the *sefira*, work on internalizing one of the 48 paths. Then on the 49th day, review them all. This will prepare you for Kabbalas HaTorah.

Today is the 20th day of the Omer. Today's path to acquiring Torah is called "*erech apayim*" - patience. Successful Torah learning requires many forms of patience. Firstly, have patience with yourself. Realize that learning is a life-long endeavor. Success is not measured in hours or days. Many types of progress are only detectable after a few years. Look back and feel satisfaction. Secondly, have patience with your *chavrusa* (study partner). It takes effort to understand him and to help him understand you. He may think more quickly, slowly, deeply, or superficially than you. He may be more or less creative than you are. It can take

time and patience to establish good communication and understanding. Thirdly, your teacher may also require patience. It takes time to fully understand the depth of what he is saying. Sometimes he reprimands you. Patiently listen and receive his words with love, knowing that he cares for you.

The opposite of patience is anger. One who becomes angry loses his wisdom (Gemora Pesachim 66b). One who is meticulous (about the faults of others) cannot teach (Pirkei Avos 2:5). Consequently, he will forego much wisdom, because one learns more from his students than anyone. Anger weakens a person's *seichel* (common sense), his body, and causes many *tsaros* (troubles) which will take him away from learning. From all this we see that patience is an indispensable tool to learning Torah. May we all merit the patience required to reach Torah greatness.*



Kinderlach . . .
How do we strengthen our patience? With emunah. Realize that everything is from Hashem. His deeds are only good. Some things are difficult for us. The Almighty is giving us "patience exercises". Would you like your learning to improve quickly? Have patience. Hashem wants you to go at this pace. Would you like your chavrusa to understand you? Have patience and explain yourself again, perhaps from a different angle. This will also improve your clarity and ability to explain your thoughts. Is it sometimes difficult to understand your Rebbe? Have patience and try harder. You will be rewarded. Patience is a spiritual gold mine, kinderlach. Develop it and become rich in Torah and mitzvos.

*(See the sefer "U'Sfartem Lachem Ha-Katzar).

A New World

"You shall count for yourselves . . . seven complete weeks" (Vayikra 23:15). This is the mitzvah of counting the Omer. During these seven weeks, we work on

perfecting ourselves in preparation for receiving the Torah. In the days of the Beis HaMikdash, the first day's Omer offering was brought from barley, an unrefined grain fit for animal food. That symbolizes the person in his rough form, before he begins working on himself. The offering brought on Shavuus, at the end of the counting, was made of refined wheat, symbolic of the refined personality, capable of understanding and acquiring Torah. Each day, we count another portion of Omer, and move up another rung in the ladder of spiritual growth.

Rav Dessler zt"l explains that an elevation in one's spiritual level is actually a new world. An elevated person finds himself in entirely different spiritual environment. Yesterday, he was working on getting to school early. Today he has succeeded. This is no longer his test. However, he now has the test of not listening to *loshon hora* while waiting for the school bell to ring.

Rav Dessler points out that the idea goes much deeper. Every choice that Hashem places before you every moment of your life is something entirely new. No other person in history ever had the opportunity to do what you are about to do. When you exercise your free will and perform the mitzvah, you are creating a new world for yourself. This is the meaning of the *mincha chadasha* (new grain offering), that refined wheat offering brought on Shavuus. The "new" grain offering represents the "new" world that he has created.

Kinderlach . . .
Did you ever climb up a mountain, or walk up to the top floor of a tall building? Did you stop every so often to enjoy the view from the new high point that you had reached? As you got higher and higher, the view looked different. You could see things that were not visible from down below. Kinderlach, this is similar to climbing the ladder of spiritual development. Every time you pass a spiritual test by doing a mitzvah, you move up the ladder. The world looks different now. You have a new point of view. May you always merit to continue climbing that ladder and reaching new spiritual heights.

Parasha Questions:

- For whom is a Kohen Godol permitted to make himself *tomei*? (Rashi 21:12)
- Which members of the Kohen's household may eat *trumah*? (22:11 and Rashi)
- What are some examples of blemishes in animals? (22:22-24)
- What is the minimum age for an ox, sheep, or goat to be a *korbon*? (22:27)