



פרשת אמור

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Parshas Emor has an extensive list of all our מועדים, often translated as festivals. I once had an Italian barber, who after a very brief explanation of our Yom Kippur schedule, suggested that perhaps the Messiah will be a "nice'a guy", who is going to say, "you coulda eat, you coulda drink". Obviously, he missed the point, but he is not alone in misunderstanding our Yomim Tovim. Long ago, I heard a recording of Harav Gifter (and many others subsequently) who explained the word מועד to mean "meeting place", as in אוהל מועד - I think his masterful analysis included the words "rendezvous with Shechinah." This is how Tisha Baav can be called a מועד, because through the prevalent Halachos etc., we are removed from the regular tedium of life and can allow ourselves to think. See Ramchal in Derech Hashem (ח"ד פ"ז) who expounds this idea as only the Ramchal can. The קדושת המועדים allows us to extend קדושה into the mundane world called Olam Haze. The visions, the excitement of that rendezvous must allow us, at least a glimpse, of השמים על הארץ, "Himmildike Teg" despite having to service the גוף and its leaden feet. Therefore, in Emor, the Torah includes Shabbos as the first of the Moadim - it serves that purpose on a weekly basis. Shabbos, with its Kedusha, allows us to lift ourselves up a little above the gravity of the ground. Hence, the Minhag to elevate ourselves off the floor while saying קדוש קדוש קדוש, trying to free ourselves, at least symbolically, from the shackles that human beings are restrained by.

All of us, right now, are also in the middle of a Yom Tov. No, no, no my calendar is not off. Many of us know the classic idea of the Ramban (23:36) who teaches that the days of Sefirah are really the Chol Hamoed that connects the first part of Yom Tov - Pesach, with

the last days of Yom Tov, Shavous. This is why Chazal called Shavous ATZERES, because it corresponds to the שמיני עצרת, which concludes the Yom Tov of Succos. How are we to understand the עומק of the Ramban; how does it all connect? According to my calculations, it must have been at least twenty years ago when I said a shmuz in a Yeshiva, and I made copies of a mind-boggling piece in the Sefer והקבלה written by Harav Zvi Mecklenburg (1785-1865). He became the Rav in Konigsberg and, together with the Malbim, fought reform Judaism. In בחוקותי (27:32) he writes ושאלתי את פי אדוני מורי ורבי הגאון מוהר' עקיבא איגר זצ"ל to who his Rebbi was. But here in Emor, he raises many issues pertaining to Sefiras Haomer thus showing us how much we have overlooked. Dos Darf Men Lernen! He asks, all the קרבנות מנחה are named after the vessel from which they were produced - תנור, מרחשת, and the likes. However, the Korban Omer is named after THE WEIGHT, THE VOLUME, because העומר is translated as a weight (see Rashi 25:10 עומר: עשירות האיפה). His novel Vort is based on the understanding of הנופה, the waving of the עומר; it was waved in all four directions, ד', to show that ALL PRODUCE is not a result of mans effort or human ingenuity, but it is all from the Creator of the entire world. Hashem created the world, AND US, and graced us with the bounty we need to live IN ORDER TO SERVE HIM. The Ksav V'hakabalah derives the word עומר from servitude, as it says in the Pasuk in description of kidnapping a person, והתעמר בו ומכרו - he enslaves him and sells him, which is a "לשון השתעבדות". The bringing of the קרבן עומר signifies that we acknowledge that all time bound successes are intended to allow us to be עבדי ה'. He raises another serious question, how come Chazal created





the Beracha - על ספירת העומר, the counting of the עומר. We are not counting the Omer, we are counting the days from WHEN we brought the Omer. His solution is that we are counting the days of when we accepted the jurisdiction of Hashem over all our actions - קבלת - עול מלכות שמים - days of שעבוד, commitment.

This would also explain a question that many Mefarshim ask - if we are counting the days until Shavous, we should count backwards, by how many days are left. If we are counting the days of our assuming responsibility, this is no longer a question. The Ksav V'hakabala then addresses the days of Sefirah as being preparing ourselves for the ultimate responsible faithfulness, Kabalas HaTorah, which are now rightfully called ימי העומר as they are designed to be "להכין לבנו" "ולתקדש ולטהר". He takes us now to another level of עומק. The Torah forbids all degrees of Chametz on Pesach to, as so many point out, to avoid the bad Middos that it represents - as we know, the Yetzer Hara's nickname is "שאר שבעיסה". The first night of Pesach, when we are commanded to eat Matzah, a bread devoid of those Middos, does not need a ספירה. But only on the second night (in Eretz Yisroel) where Matzah is voluntary, do we need to assert ourselves by preparing to become loyal servants, therefore we start counting our השתעבדות. He then suggests that the direction we take by eating Matzah, and counting the days that qualify us for an efficient עול קבלת, may be the reason the Chachamim did not designate a ברכת שהחיינו on Sefirah as the שהחיינו we made on Matzah covers the Sefirah as well. (See Baal Hamaor at the end of Pesachim and Likutei Hagriz pg. 57) The Ksav V'hakabalah ties it all up by saying that at the conclusion of Sefirah, we dedicate all that we are to Kadesh Baruch Hu. We leave the barrier to greatness, self-indulgence, behind us and celebrate our new yoke of Torah and Mitzvos

- Shavous, מלשון שבו. Shavous is when we capture and reign in "לאסור כל תאוות יצר" and joyously shout נעשה ונשמע. I did warn you that "Dos Darf Men Lernen." The entire circle of Yetzias Mitzrayim to Sinai is for us to learn that עבדי הם, they are MY AVADIM, כל - מכל - בכל.

One final point. We celebrate our emancipation from Mitzrayim, free men, only to become servants to "ANOTHER BOSS," כביכול, with another set of rules, so we are still not free. Rav Chaim Volozhin (Ruach Chaim 6th Perek) defines the words of Eved and Ben Chorin for us. The Braisah says, אין לך בן חורין אלא מי שעוסק בתורה. What would we say about someone who has a gun pointed at his head and is told to count thousands of coins on the table, but as a result, every coin he counts will BELONG TO HIM. Is he an Eved, who everything that he does belongs to his master, or is he a Ben Chorin because all of his efforts belong to him? If you are forced BY THE TORAH, and you are held captive by the Halacha, you yourself will reap the benefits of your labors; you are a free man. Too often we hear people say that the Halachah is too inhibiting, cramps my style etc. It is because they don't understand freedom. Everyone bows to different alters, we are captives to our desires but בחירה allows us choose which altar to bow to. The true בן חורין will choose the altar that will bring him benefits בזבא.

We should all be Zocheh to use our Chol Hamoed, for a trip that will last גואל עד ביאת גואל.

Among those that are מצפים לישועה.

אמני דאנפיה
חיים טובים ושלום

